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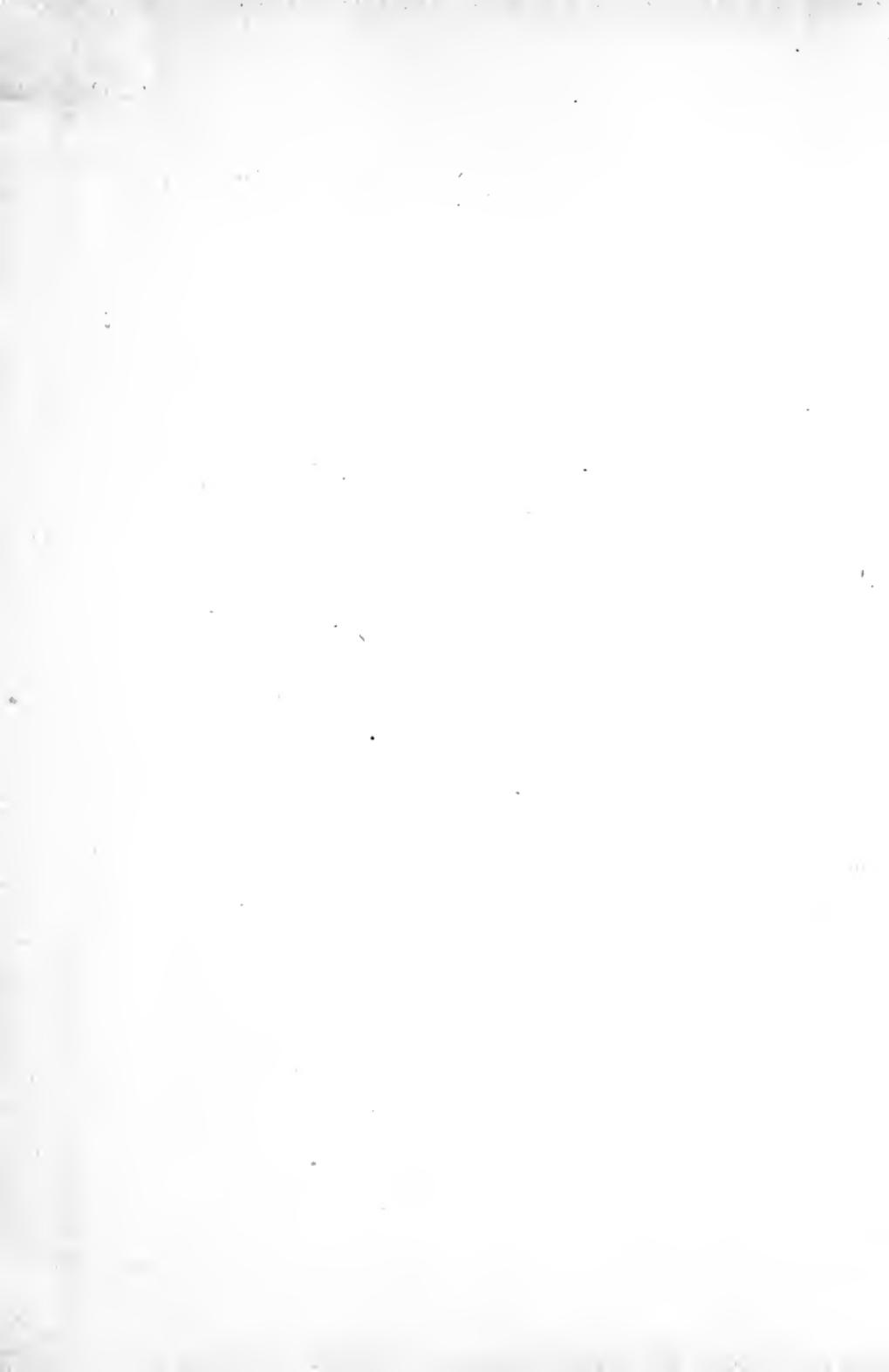
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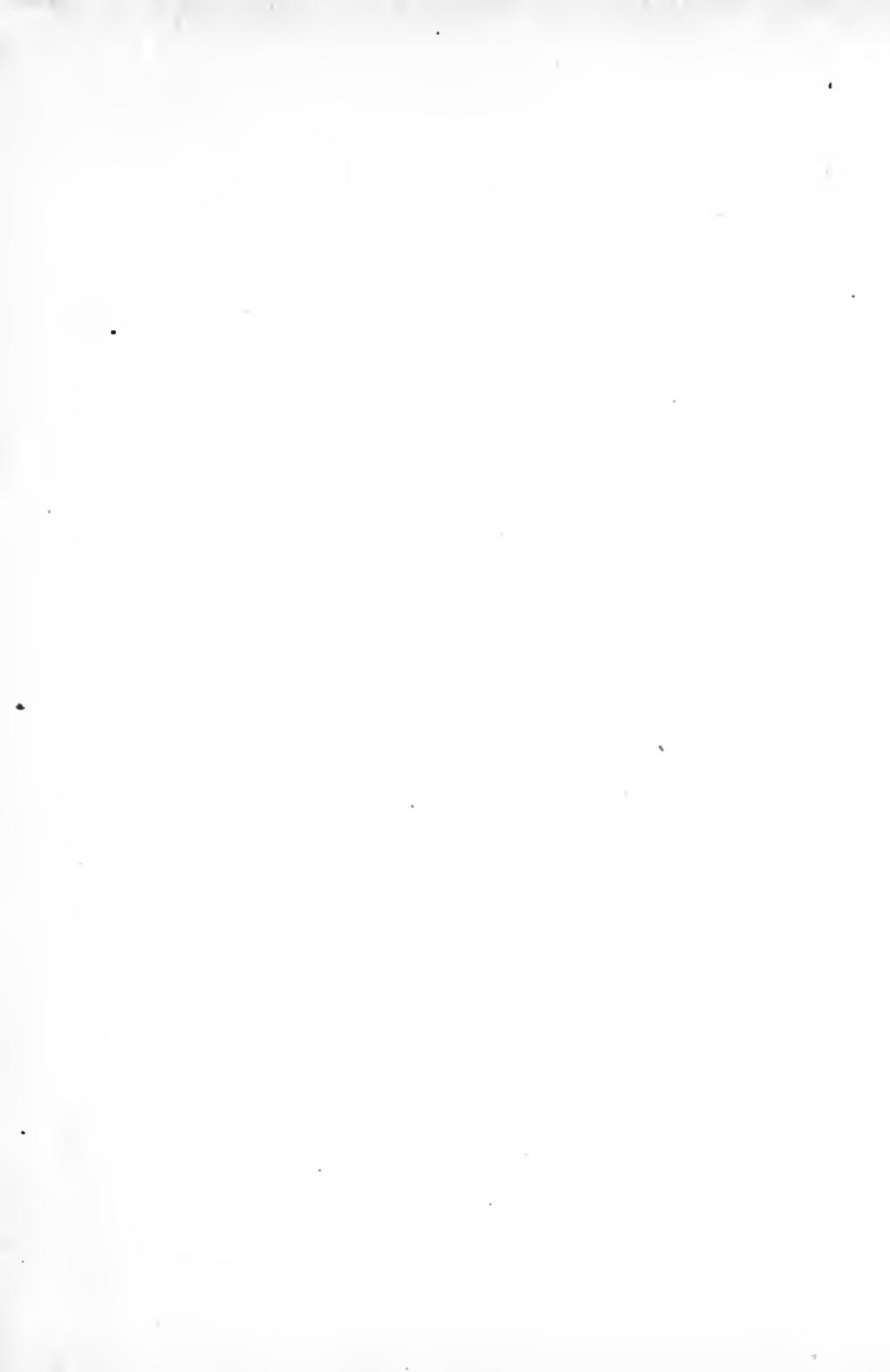


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A GEORGIAN BUNGALOW

BY

FRANCES COURtenAY BAYLOR



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A GEORGIAN BUNGALOW

CHAPTER I

A SOUTHERN HOME

A VAST stretch of country set in Debatable Land. The sea, brimming high above miles and miles of marshes ; sending by a mighty impulse its spray flying over sand dunes, and palms, and palmettoes along every beach ; puffing its salty whiffs, winnowed by all the winds battling between Africa and America, across wide stretches of half-submerged land ; throwing its long arms far, far inland around richly wooded islands ; and winding in, through, about the low levels of rush-covered sand,— ever threatening, uprooting, destroying.

The patient land, at every ebb of the enemy, sending its grasses, and reeds, and grains right gallantly down to the very edge of the ocean, rooting them in mire and sand, in the very driftwood and wreckage thrown up against them by the ocean

in its rage over their audacity ; covering its hills and dunes with sea-oats, its marshes with rushes, in spite of constant discouragement and inconstant waves, making, here and there, a few firm acres on which to set magnificent oaks veiled in long tendrils of gray moss, palmettoes, growths of many kinds, — ever building, repairing, reclaiming. Everywhere, everything telling of both land and sea — the very sea half land, the land half sea : the birds belonging to both kingdoms, — long-legged, long-billed cranes and herons, short-bodied gulls, and ducks of brilliant plumage, flying over the marshes, or lighting in some solitary spot, and standing on one weary leg until startled by some sight or sound into flying off again ; the redwing nesting securely on the marsh tussocks, the mockingbirds pouring out their flood of harmony from the islands, the finches and sparrows singing and twittering among the reeds, stray orioles and woodpeckers, from more northern climes, darting here and there throughout the woods : the very plants and flowers born of this union of land and sea partaking of the nature of both ; strange, uncanny things, often slimy and fleshy when found among the shells and sands of the beach, succulent and many-tinted farther inland, pliant all, and built to bear the sudden swirl and

uplift of the water, rich in color, knowing well the sweetness of the sun's kiss. Above the wide, low, level landscape the blue magnificence of the southern sky, with great white clouds floating across it, like detached mountains from the heavenly country. Beyond it the changing glories of the illimitable sea.

Here, some ten miles inland, on the Tomochichi River, among the uplands, was set a model plantation house of the better sort, on an estate primarily devoted to the production of rice, but rich in many delightful things, and known as "Neosha." First there was a charming family of English people, the Nortons, who had bought the estate from its impoverished owner, a stately, courtly old man (of the type once so familiar to Southerners, cast in the mould that can alone form the highbred gentleman the world over), now retired to his former overseer's cottage across the river. Then there was a roomy boat-house below an ideal bath-house, and finally there was a most beautiful and unique garden, the like of which was not to be found or seen in this country. The Nortons' rose-garden was indeed one of the notable things of the countryside, and gave more pleasure annually to their friends and acquaintances than could be at all estimated. It was at its best in the month in which our story opens,—June,

— and consisted of acres of exquisite roses of every kind, in full bloom, surrounded by a hedge of other roses, the white Cherokee, and all owing their perfections to the ugly rice mud beneath, the blazing tropical sun above, and the soft air around them. Mr. Norton was a connoisseur in roses, and a great lover of them ; a good botanist, and an indefatigable gardener. He had come to the country with his wife just at the close of our civil war, and had fortunately been able to build the estate up to the antebellum level again, and keep it there. The lawn, which as an Englishman he was sternly determined to have, he eventually produced from cocoa grass. There was an imposing avenue of oaks leading up to the house which stood embowered, as it were, in vigorous crape myrtles, flinging their generous pink - tipped branches toward every window. In place of the traditional apple or peach orchard, there was one no less delicious of Smyrna and Celeste figs, as both the birds and the boys well understood, and two great arbors of scuppernongs, and a big watermelon patch, the delight of “ You-pam,” “ Candy Doll,” and the pigs. The house was a large one, built on the old bungalow plan of the South, the East Indies, the tropics generally : raised on pillars, surrounded on every side by wide



MR. NORTON'S ROSE GARDEN



verandas, with rooms on both sides of the wide halls that traversed the house and crossed each other at right angles,— a plan that cannot be improved upon for a hot climate. In the rear were the servants' offices, in which lived Daddy Dick, Maumer Oney, his wife, Big Maria, Little Maria, Betty, Henny, and her two children, "Candy Doll" and Youpam (derived from Epaminondas, a worthy rashly mentioned by Mr. Norton one day at dinner, and appropriated with variations by Daddy Dick's son, Sam, the butler), three other men, and a boy. Beyond this again dwelt the field hands.

As for the family proper, it consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Norton, their children (Mabel, aged sixteen, Edward, a boy of fourteen, Frank, whose chief regret in life was that he was "only ten," Lucy, a child of eight, and the youngest and prettiest of them all, generally called "dear little Keith"), the governess, Fräulein Dinkspiel (who laid great stress upon the proper pronunciation of the "spiel" in her name), and a tutor, Mr. Caruthers, a youthful graduate of the University of Virginia, as modest and clever as he was manly and good-looking.

Between the house and the servants' offices was a plot of ground which the children regarded as most important of all, for there was the pigeon-

cote, and there the rabbit-hutches ; there was the kennel that held, that generally did *not* hold, "Waggles," their beloved dog ; there were their chameleons, and a tank full of fish ; and there was their blue heron and their tame (broken-hearted would be a better term) alligator, so weary of being everlastinglly poked up by a long succession of little Nortons that he was called in the family "Pooh-bah ! "

In such a spot, it must be clear that children, at least, could not have been otherwise than happy, and that the elder folk had their occupations, consolations, and diversions. Mr. Norton was nearly always to be found in the garden with Daddy Dick, who always addressed him as "Cunngle" and gave his whole mind to seeing how little he could do — unlike his master, who never could do enough, or grow accustomed to the leisurely ways and the ingenious excuses, the infinite capacity for sleeping and eating, the constitutional objection to working, of the colored people. He always treated them with the courtesy that English gentlemen show their servants ; he was never in the least familiar with them ; he paid them liberally and promptly. He never could understand why the stars in their courses, according to Daddy Dick, seemed to fight against

his weeding, watering, clipping, ploughing the beloved roses ; or why Dick grinned with delight and fell to hoeing with the greatest possible energy and spirit, when Mr. Carlton, his former master and owner, coming over to see Mr. Norton, would call out : “Dick, you black rascal, are you going to let those Marshal Niels die for want of water ? And look at that bed of tea-roses, there ; don’t you see they need shading ? And see here, there’s a pair of trousers up at the house for you, and I’ve paid for having that old mule of yours shod — the one with the fiddle-box head.” That mule was the apple of Daddy Dick’s eye. He had a little plot of land on the other side of “Bolton’s cut,” one of the many winding waterways of the county, which he called his “fa-am” — there was not an *r* in his vocabulary — and “Linkum” was his silent and very efficient, if somewhat obstinate, partner in the business of raising watermelons during his leisure hours. And nothing made the Norton children quite so happy as a visit to his cabin, to Sally, his wife, to “Linkum” (for Lincoln), and the pigs. “Dick and I understand each other,” Mr. Carlton would say.

“Yeh. We was born de same day, and christened de same day, and got married de same day.

But de Cunnle he ain't had no luck. Sally she's my sevent wife, and younger'n my daughter. But he is done have to live along wid de same old Miss right straight thoo," Dick would answer.

Mrs. Norton, at first, had been equally puzzled by servants that never drank beer, knew nothing of "board-wages," resented being given their weekly allowance of food, and were generally so trying, in some ways, and entirely different from anything she had ever known. "If they would only not clean the kettles with my apostle spoons, and dust with my best table-napkins!" she would say to her husband: "And if I could only depend upon them as one does at home."

But they both knew all about the race by the time Fräulein Dinkspiel appeared on the scene, and greatly enjoyed proceedings that quite scandalized the plantation.

"*Kommen sie hier,*" the worthy lady cried to Candy Doll the day of her arrival; "I would your wool feel. Hein! But it is like the sheep," and then kissed her, which sent all the Norton children off in rows into such fits of giggles that fräulein in her turn was quite scandalized.

"It is not proper that the young lady, the young gentleman, should so conduct themselves," she said

to them. "And you, call you that a name — Candy Doll?" she continued.

"Yeh-hum," replied the little black sheep, showing all her ivories.

"Her mother called her that," explained Lucy solemnly. "It was n't her fault."

"'Cause I'se so thweet," added Candy Doll. "And here's Youpam," pushing forward her brother.

"But the registrar, the priest, they allow such ridiculousness in America!" cried fräulein fiercely. "It is quite shameful, this. And what will become, when you are an ugly old woman, eh? A nice name then, truly, eh?"

Candy Doll was unequal to the situation for several reasons. She was afraid of the strange white lady in blue goggles, who first kissed her and then rated her, for one thing. She had no idea at all on the subject of such a remote future state, for another. So she sucked her thumb, and hung her head, a quaint little figure enough in her red cotton slip, her little legs and feet bare, her hair standing out à la Congo all over her head.

"Come along. It ain't your fault. I would n't mind, if I were you," said Lucy, putting a protecting arm around her protégée and leading her away.

"What is your name, fräulein?" asked Mabel as she seated herself.

"Aneuta Yoganyvna Papava, after my mother, who was Russian; Carlotta Ulrica Bettina, after my father's sister; Stéphanie Jeanne, for my mother's sister; Margarita for my great-grandmother, who was French by nativity; Augusta, Teresa, Bertha, Louisa, Caroline, and, in course, Dinkspiel," replied fräulein. "Pouf! But it is enough. I am called Bertha."

"Do say them all again," cried the children *en masse*. "Oh, mother dear! you should just hear the names that fräulein has got."

Mrs. Norton had come in to tell fräulein that she must not embrace all the little darkies on the plantation, as it would certainly throw her household into the greatest possible confusion, but she listened first to the singular recital.

"And were you allowed to have them all? Why, it is as bad as the Infanta of Spain!" she said, and then went on to give her little warning.

"Oh, de boor, bretty little dings! Wherfore not? Is it a harm?" asked fräulein. "A child is a child, be she black, be she white, be she yellow. Und I loike so all children. Dey are so fresh from Hayven, und die Allgutigste."

CHAPTER II

SOME FISH — ALSO A FRIGHT

“WELL, children, what do you say to a day on Curlew Island ?” asked Mr. Norton of the assembled family at the breakfast-table on the morning of the fifth of July. “The weather is perfect, not too hot, and we have n’t been fishing for a year.”

The faces around him were answer enough to this question. But there was a great chorus of : “Oh, papa, do let us ! Delightful ! Is mamma coming ? and fräulein ? And can’t Candy Doll and Youpam come, too ? ”

“There they are now !” cried Mabel, and looking out of the window, they all saw Daddy Dick mounted on “Linkum” standing before the front door. Behind him were Youpam and Candy Doll, who seemed about to slip over Linkum’s tail. In front of them all (some distance off, indeed) was an enormous watermelon, of the famous ivy pattern. Linkum seemed in extremely low spirits, and drooped his head and tail most dejectedly. The children

were in high glee, and dug their bare heels into his side. Daddy Dick's melancholy, meek face wore an expression of proud gratification, very unusual to it, as he announced to Alfred that he had brought tribute from his "fa-am" for "de Cunnle," and had left one just like it for "de old Cunnle." Mr. Norton went out, and having paid Daddy Dick in cold cash for his present, much to his chagrin, bade him get the men and the boats as they were off for a picnic.

The big mirror in the hall, which, when the front door was open, so beautifully reflected the rose-garden beyond and made one of the prettiest effects about the tasteful home, now showed an animated family party. There was Mr. Norton, in his oldest clothes, a wet cabbage leaf under his puggrey, his hands full of fishing-tackle, his thoughts now with his wife, now with his children, now with the servants. There was Mrs. Norton, very sweet and motherly in her blue cotton gown, having a huge hamper packed before her eyes, collecting the bathing-suits, clapping huge straw hats on the boys' heads, repressing Waggles's overtures, giving directions to Maumer Oney about a hot supper to be prepared by the time they got back. There was Fräulein Dinkspiel, pinning two veils on a huge inverted

mushroom of a hat, her goggles well settled on her nose, her kind German face beaming with satisfaction, a book under her arm, her knitting in her pocket, her rod in her hand, and bathing-suit and umbrella neatly strapped lying at her feet. There were Edward and Frank and Keith, sliding down the banisters, squabbling over lines and rods and hooks, fingering the bait in the big can just brought in by Sam, peeping into the luncheon hamper with, “Mamma, can’t I have a cake?” behaving, in short, as boys always have done, and always will do as long as boys continue to be boys, on such occasions. There was Mabel, such a sweetly pretty, fair girl, almost as tall as her mother, and quite as womanly, looking for some fans, putting ammonia and court-plaster and Pond’s Extract into her bag, “for the boys’” possible needs and injuries; a fresh hand-kerchief and a new novel “for mamma;” combs, brushes, soap, towels, “for everybody;” unconscious that little Keith was delightfully occupied fastening fish-hooks in the neat braids of her back hair. There was Lucy, dancing all over the place like a big butterfly, all excitement and interest in everybody’s proceedings. There was Big Maria, who was as tall and lank as a beanpole, and the soul of cheerful good-nature, hunting for all the things that

were so imperatively needed at once, and booming out her replies in her own big voice. There was Little Maria, who was as small and dismal as any woman ever got to be, making mountains of sandwiches and rebuffing the children in her meekest whispers. There was Daddy Dick, hat in hand, waiting orders ; likewise Sam and Ned, his son and nephew. There was Maumer Oney (who must have weighed a ton, and wore the most stylish head-handkerchief left in the neighborhood, almost the only one that freedom and new days and ways had spared, indeed), wiping her shining black face at short intervals with her apron, and interjecting remarks about the advisability of "stewin' de cherries" and "havin' a Sallie Lumm."

But at last, after any amount of hurrying and scurrying, of remembering and forgetting, Mr. Norton strode off across the lawn, followed by Waggles, all playful barks and bounds, and by the entire party, including Youpam and Candy Doll, who brought up the rear, and were smuggled into the boats by Lucy when her father's back was turned. When everybody was sure, in answer to the questions of Mr. and Mrs. Norton, that the luncheon, the rods, the bait, the umbrellas, the fans, the bags, and the children were all there, including the unin-

vited but not unwelcome little playmates, the heavily laden boats pushed off from the shore, and turning, made off through miles and miles of waterways that wound around and about and through the country, in a way that made it seem wonderful that Daddy Dick should be able to choose, always, just the right turning, where all looked exactly alike.

“Mamma, can I have a cake?” demanded all the children at short intervals, but only little Keith got one. They were off for “a party,” and as he kept asking “when the party would begin?” that, of course, meant refreshments, as he was too small to understand that the hamper must not be opened just yet.

Fräulein got out her knitting as soon as she was comfortably settled. She did not believe in any more idleness than was necessary in life, and came of thrifty folk, who had brought her up in a stern but admirable school.

“You are not going to knit *now*, are you, fräulein?” asked Lucy pettishly.

“Yes, *liebchen*, I must have stockings; and look you, I am fifty. I have no time to waste. Nor have you. No one has, be the life ever so long. I regret me very much the hours that I imaginated only when I was young girl. Of what use? No-

thing has come for what I made such fine stories. Much sorrow, much work only. But this I have found : Laziness and lies are the worst of all. So I speak always truth, and I work always. And I am not unhappy, no ; so far I am like the good God."

"But, fräulein, you have six hundred pairs of stockings already," said Mabel.

"Yes, I am of respectable family," replied fräulein with pride.

"But what do you want with so many?"

"We have the great wash only once by the year. You know one must needs many. My aunt, who was of a high family, had nine hundred. She is dead now. Her livers and gizzards and lungs was all wrong."

The children all laughed out over this, to them, amazing statement of several facts.

"What ! You only had your clothes washed once a year ?" cried Edward. "What did you do with them ?"

"They was all to the garret taken and shaken ; ya ! but shaken and hung up over the ropes there," replied fräulein.

"What a nasty idea !" ejaculated Frank.

"You English think all is nasty what is not English," retorted fräulein, as she started a fresh needle.

“But that could n’t be nice!” cried Mabel. “And your aunt — why, if she had had as many legs as a centipede, she could not have worn all those stockings !”

“I well remember me that she did,” insisted fräulein. “She was high well-born ; and they was all silk too. Boor ding ! she was always very bad with her livers.”

“She could n’t have but one, fräulein, and only chickens have gizzards,” said Edward, shifting his seat and causing the boat to lurch decidedly.

“Look out !” shouted Mr. Norton.

“I thought I saw a shark,” replied Edward, peering down into the rushes over which the boat was passing, thickly as they grew in the water, just as if they were not there at all.

“Too far from de sea, sah,” said Daddy Dick, bending forward and making the boat leap ahead under his long, steady strokes. “Is you brought de confusion maker, sah ?” he slyly added, looking at Mr. Norton. “An’ de watermillion ?”

Mr. Norton exchanged glances with his wife and smiled. Daddy Dick had but one weakness. He was too fond of whiskey, of which he always spoke with the greatest contempt in this way.

“Mamma, what is a ‘high well-born’?” asked

Lucy, harking back to what fräulein had said. “And isn’t it perfectly disgusting to wash clothes only once a year?”

“‘*Autres pays, autres mœurs,*’ my dear. The customs and manners of all nations differ. I should not say ‘disgusting,’ if I were you. As for fräulein’s aunt, she was a noble woman.”

“Can’t I be a noble woman, mamma?” asked Lucy.

“You certainly can, my dear,—with a difference. Fortunately it is not a matter of stockings,” replied Mrs. Norton. “Your father does not come of the nobility, but of the gentry, in England. You cannot be a duchess, or countess, but in the best sense, there is no limit to the kind of nobility that I wish for you, my dear child.”

“Is that Candy Doll back behind us, and Youpam, *alias* Epaminondas,” asked Mr. Norton from the boat just in front of them. “What are they doing here?”

“Yessah,” replied the brother and sister, much abashed.

“Oh, papa, I asked you, and I just could n’t bear to have Candy Doll left behind! She promised to teach me how to float,” cried Lucy.

“Can you float and swim, Candy Doll?” asked fräulein. “Oh, the ridiculousness — that name!”

“ Yessum ! ” replied Candy Doll, casting her eyes down upon her bare feet, and sticking her thumb bashfully in her mouth.

“ Put on dat sunbonnet ! Ain’t you goin’ to ? What yoh mammy say ’bout tak’n’ care o’ yoh skin ! ” interjected Daddy Dick sternly.

Candy Doll was already black beyond the power of any sun to affect her complexion, but she started in a guilty way, and hurriedly donned a yellow calico sunbonnet, with very limp slats that flapped about and over her face most uncomfortably.

“ Here, gal ! ” cried Youpam, as he took hold of one of her long plaits, drew it up through a hole at the back of her sunbonnet, and tied it with a piece of cord to the “ curtain ; ” “ now you is all right.”

“ Quit ! Stop dat, Youpam ! ” said Candy Doll ; “ you hurted me.”

“ Where is your manners ? Who done raised you ? Ef you get pernickity, I ’se gwine throw you right out dis boat to de fishes,” cried Daddy Dick wrathfully to the pair. “ Don’ yoh open yoh mouth agin, do you hear ? ”

“ Yessah,” cried the twins, subsiding immediately.

All this time less and less was to be seen of anything that suggested the stability of earth ; more and more was there the swell and uplift of the

ocean ; until, at last, across the thicket of bay and rose hips in which ended a gentle slope, purple with asters at certain seasons, appeared a snow-white sand dune, and beyond this again a beautiful sweep of ocean as blue as the sky overhead.

“Ach ! Thou loved Heaven ! But the ocean is never to be sufficiently admired,” cried fräulein in German. “You remember you, Mabel, of that boetry of Heine” —

But she got no further, for “Drop anchor,” cried Mr. Norton ; and down it went ! Daddy Dick rested from his labors and wiped his brow. Everybody seized a pole. The awning overhead was shifted into position ; silence was enjoined ; and at once over went the lines of the entire party. For three hours they sat thus, catching mullet, silver fish, sharks, with only such speeches as were necessary, under a burning sun, tempered by a cool wind. The boys’ arms and legs were bare, and burned crimson in the glare from the water. Daddy Dick was kept busy baiting hooks. Fräulein earnestly brooded over a new rod and line just imported from New Orleans, but caught nothing. Edward got tired soon, and took to his book about homing pigeons. Little Keith ate, and drank, and fell asleep in his mother’s lap. Mabel and Lucy and Frank exclaimed over

their good luck. When the sharks had all had their noses broken and been thrown back into the water to float but never again to sink, and the flapping fish that filled the boat-tank were duly counted and it was found that there were two hundred and twenty of them, Mr. Norton, who had caught the greater part of them, pulled in his line and ordered a halt.

“I’ve caught ten,” said Mabel.

“And I twelve!” cried Frank.

“And I fifteen, but four of them were sharks,” said Mrs. Norton. “And see how one of them has finned my thumb.”

“Und I, not nothing — no! I must a more excellent rod get me,” said fräulein, with a sigh of fatigue.

“Well, I caught fifty,” said Mr. Norton cheerfully.” “How many did you catch, Candy Doll?”

“Seventy-nine, sah,” reported the yellow sunbonnet, and so she had! With an ordinary line and hook, the little water rat had been steadily hauling them in over the side of the boat ever since they began, and had easily carried off the honors of the expedition.

They now moved off to another place, and again tried their luck. This time Daddy Dick and Sam got everything, and Mr. Norton shared fräulein’s ill luck.

"We'll be off to the island now and cook some of them," he commanded, and forthwith, after a short pull, Daddy Dick sent the boat up into the shallows and they all went ashore.

Some dwarf palms, a great many low sand-hills, covered with pampas grass and sea-oats, a fine beach, a thundering surf, and a rough cottage set on the edge of its three hundred acres,—this was Curlew Island. Daddy Dick and Sam disappeared into the cottage at once and lit a big fire, put on a kettle of hominy, and began to clean fish. A glorious game of blind-man's-buff followed for the Norton children, in which the twins shared.

"Take off your bonnet, Candy Doll, it is very nice and shady here," said Mabel, in the midst of it.

"I kain'; it'll spile my skin. Mammy say I'll be most white when I done growed up, if I wear dis yeller bonnet stiddy, and takes my pills," insisted Candy Doll, resisting Mabel's attempt to remove it forcibly.

"Oh, yes, you'll be a lily, sure," cried Frank ungenerously. "What makes you such a goose, Candy Doll? My sisters have got their bonnets off. Look at them."

"Yeh. But dey des natchelly white. Dey don' need no bonnets and no pills," cried Candy Doll, wholly unconvinced.

“What kind of pills?” asked Edward. “See here! I am afraid somebody has been taking you in.”

“Daddy Dick give a dollar for ‘em. De paper say dey turn a colored lady snow-white in tree days, and mek her hair straight as a poker.”

“Have you got them with you?” asked Edward; and on her saying “Yeh; in my pawket,” and producing a pill-box with a flaming poster inside that abundantly bore out all Candy Doll’s statements, he seized it and threw it into the ocean,—whereupon both the twins “howled and yowled like anything,” to quote Frank’s explanation to fräulein.

“It is a beastly fraud, I tell you! Don’t you suppose I know? I mean to protect you,” said Edward loftily, thrusting his hands in his jacket pocket and marching up and down with much dignity. “It is my duty as a gentleman.”

“I don’ wan’ to be dat! I don’ wan’ to be dat! I wan’ my pills,” sobbed Candy Doll, and it was all fräulein could do to comfort her. But having done so, she left the children to themselves, and going behind the cabin, stretched herself out on a tarpaulin that had been left there, and took a nap, her broad, kindly German face still protected by her goggles; her thick, squat figure comfortably dis-

posed ; her fat legs and enormous feet making of her what Mabel called "a perfect spectacle." Peacefully did the good soul sleep, loudly snore, until roused by a terrific shriek. Rushing round the cabin she made for the group of children, and found in the midst of them, first, Keith, dripping wet and unconscious ; second, Candy Doll, in an equally humid state, but still with her bonnet on and quite herself ; third, Waggles, wet like the other two, but apparently very angry,—all barks. And now it came out that Candy Doll had rowed Lucy and Keith back a bit to a quiet spot to teach Lucy how to float ; that Keith had tumbled into the water followed by Waggles ; that Candy Doll had fished him out and brought him back to the island. Water was her native element, and she was as much at home in it as one of the alligators which she alone feared. There was a great outcry and excitement, of course ; but in a few minutes Keith was as well as ever, and Daddy Dick was calling out from the cabin that the fish were fried, when off trooped the hungry flock of children, eager to eat their share and tell Mrs. Norton their tale.

CHAPTER III

A FAMILY FEAST, AND THE BIG CATCH

IT was a pleasant sight to see the little party assembled under the tree near the cabin, around a rough pine table that Sam had scoured. At one end was a royal, Homeric pile of fish, browned to a turn, a huge bowl of hominy smoked at the other, and between were spread out all the goodies that Maumer Oney had prepared ; in the centre blushed Daddy Dick's "watermillion." Youpam and Candy Doll sat at the foot of the tree, with Waggles beside them in an attitude most expressive of gentlemanly expectancy of innumerable bones. The proverbial appetite that waits on picnics was not absent. Fräulein especially distinguished herself in this line.

"There are better things than *catching* fish, eh, fräulein ?" said Mr. Norton, as he helped her to her fourteenth crisp, brown, delicious silver fish.

"Laugh not at me, Herr Norton, 'the good digestion waits on appetite, and health on both.' Ate I never anything more tastesome, — say you not so ?" said fräulein amiably.

"Toothsome," corrected Mrs. Norton. "I think your word better, though, I am sure."

"I was so ongry und tirsty dat I almost fell togezzer before you called us. The picnic he is nice — but very exhaustious, no?" said fräulein, turning her blue goggles with an expressive smile upon Mabel.

"I am not tired at all. Just look at Keith. Poor darling! He has had enough of it — quite. He looks pale still from his fright," said Mabel.

"I can't tell you what I felt when I looked across the water and saw his white frock just going down, mamma," said Lucy.

"Don't speak of it," cried Mrs. Norton impulsively. "It was so wrong of you, Lucy, to allow him to go in the boat at all."

"He cried so when we started that we said — we thought — But, dear mamma, you ought to have seen Candy Doll! She got to him in no time, took his dress in her teeth on one side, and Waggles, if you will believe me, caught hold on the other, and they got him ashore in no time."

"The picnic he is not good for the little child. He is more better as he is in the norsery," remarked fräulein.

"I agree with you, fräulein," said Mr. Norton.

"No more expeditions of the kind for you, little man, until you are a good five years older. Sam, more fish."

"What, papa, all that mountain gone?" asked Mrs. Norton. "Well done, children! Papa, Lucy has more color to-day than I have seen her have for a year. She looks more like the children at home, does n't she? Our English roses all disappear in this hot climate, and it is really a grief to me to see my flock so scrawny and" —

"'Greenery — yellery — Grosvenor gallery,'" quoted Mabel.

"It is the malaria what promiscuates down here, I imaginate," said fräulein gravely, attacking her fifteenth fish and looking very scientific. "So!"

"Precisely. That is about it. I wish it were a great deal more haughty and exclusive, I am sure," replied Mr. Norton. "Sam, cut the watermelon. And, hello, Candy Doll! what is the matter with you, something wrong with your starboard sheet, is n't there?"

"She had to put on my petticoat, papa. Please not to remark upon it," whispered Lucy, who was at his elbow.

"Oh, that's it, is it? But why don't you eat something, Candy Doll," looking at the great heap

of bones and then at the pair who were now grinning delightedly at him from behind enormous slices of the pinkest and wettest of watermelons. "How many fish have you eaten?"

"I've done eat till I'm most bust and Youpam is bust. Dey was so good I mos' fell right off dis here log, and he done shed he buttons all 'round. I'se pinned him up wid a torn, dough," said Candy Doll, and proceeded to run her watermelon rind rapidly all over her face.

"What's that for," asked Edward severely.

"Dat's for my skin, sah," replied Candy Doll, and the children burst out laughing over her wet face and white teeth and snapping black eyes.

"She is always doing something for her complexion. As if it were any good! Such rot!" remarked Edward with heat. "Her mother is daft on the subject. She washes in dew sometimes."

"And sometimes in buttermilk," said Frank, "and then drinks the buttermilk."

"She is — what you call in English — gump?" said fräulein, who was much interested in acquiring what she called "the idiotisms of the country."

To everybody's surprise Lucy here broke out with, "She is n't a gump at all! She is my friend; and I love her," — and burst into tears.

"That's right. Stand up for your friends, Lucy," said Mr. Norton ; "more bread, Sam."

"What are you such awful nuts on Candy Doll for ?" said Frank with scorn.

"'Awful nuts' is also an idiotism ?" inquired fräulein politely.

"Exactly," replied Mr. Norton dryly. "No slang, Frank, my boy. The English language can express anything that you are likely to say without it, I do assure you."

"Papa, dear, look at that sail, and see how high the water seems to brim above the rushes. The view from here is really as pretty a one as can be found in a flat country. I think I'll make a sketch of the cabin after dinner. That queer, daubed, wattled chimney is really most picturesque," said Mrs. Norton ; and they fixed their eyes upon a sail-boat which was tacking about one of the distant waterways, and seemed to be sailing across a sea of green rushes now and then, no water being visible.

"Candy Doll must now dance for us," said Mrs. Norton. "Come here, child, and dance for Fräulein Dinkspiel."

"*Sphiel*, madame, if it so blease you," interrupted fräulein firmly.

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Norton meekly, being one of the gentlest of her sex.

"Can she the valse dance? Come, little one, I will sing Johann Strauss for thee," said fräulein, and was as good as her word. But Candy Doll was mute and still, and gazed at her abashed for a moment.

Then she suddenly bent herself double almost, and crooning a wild African chant of her own, she started off quickly, then bounded here and there, flung her arms about, stamped, roared, subsided, whirled right, whirled left, jumped into the air, again stamped, whirled, and finally suddenly collapsed with a moan on the ground, nor would she move for fully half an hour.

"She is then fraish from Congo? New-come? Doubtless! Saw I nefer the laike! It was so—what you call him?—primitive, elemental. The monkeys, the cocoanuts, the forest, the naked savage,—all is there. I cannot tell you all what I see and hear in this. I would gif a month's salary to take that little black bird, that *danseuse Africaine*, back to Switzerland wid me and make her dance for the amusement of my people. Saw I nefer the laike,—nefer. Encore! Encore!" cried fräulein enthusiastically.

“ You are right,” said Mrs. Norton. “ It is as African as Africa, and always appeals enormously to my imagination. And my relatives, when they come out here, are all fascinated by Candy Doll. They have all sketched her, and tipped her, and chaffed her, and spoiled her generally. But as to an encore, look at her ! She is perfectly exhausted. It seems to be a kind of fit—not a dance at all ; and can you imagine anything as downright uncanny as the music, — the whole performance ?”

“ She won’t give it always—very rarely—nothing will tempt her unless she is in the mood. We’ve tried to tempt her often, have n’t we, mamma ?” “ She won’t dance at all, either, unless she has her rabbit’s foot on,—the left hind leg taken in a cemetery, in the dark of the moon,” said Mabel. “ That’s to keep off evil.”

Now during this performance Mr. Norton had been smoking and idly regarding the dance, the children about him, the servants who were clearing the table, the still more distant white sail. He now rose suddenly to his feet, exclaiming : “ By George, we are going to catch it ! ” and forthwith he hurried the entire party into the cabin, pulled down the windows, after closing and barring the wooden shutters, and then hurried out to have the boats pulled up

and stowed under the house. His eye had long been used to studying the sea and sky. He had seen the sailboat struck down as by a blow, careen, disappear. He had seen a cloud — he knew it well — more clouds — felt the change that was coming. Indeed, before he got back to the cabin the storm had come. The merriment of the family party was now all gone, and replaced by the gravest concern. They had, of course, no wraps, and it had turned cold. They had no lights. There was only one chair and a rickety couch in the way of accommodation, the property of old Daniel, who lived there and had gone to town. Sam and Daddy Dick hastily made up a little fire from a very small stock of wood that Daniel had put in the corner, and they all huddled around it. Mrs. Norton was given the only chair. Fräulein Dinkspiel sat on Daniel's bed, with many a glance of squeamish dislike at his mattress and sheet. Mr. Norton paced the floor. It was a dreadful position for him, for he alone could really estimate the gravity of the situation, the exposed position of Curlew Island; and long before the Atlantic was heard thundering along its beach, while peal after peal crashed above them, brave man though he was, he turned pale, as he looked at his dear ones. In a little while the fire burned low,

flickered, showed a few red embers, died out entirely. The cold increased. Conversation became almost impossible, for so great was the noise outside that it drowned every voice. Mrs. Norton gathered her children about her, and in the goodness of her heart made a place for Candy Doll and Youpam, whom she often reassured and comforted, laying a hand on their heads. Then the cabin began to shake in every timber, and the windows rattled under the blows of the wind, and the thunder pealed, and, worst of all, they could hear the water swirling under the house, dashing against it, lifting great battering-rams in the way of drift-logs, and assailing them with the utmost fury.

Daddy Dick and Sam began to shout and pray and groan, and make themselves heard above all the fury of the tempest. As for Mr. Norton, he acted with the greatest calmness, and spoke with the utmost cheerfulness, but his heart sank fearfully when the door was burst open the second time and the floor was found to be under water. But after this climax to their woes had been reached, the wind first veered, then dropped ; the rain ceased, the breakers gradually returned to their magnificent, limitless ocean-bed on an ebb-tide, and Mr. Norton at last dared to open the door and let in a little daylight

upon a badly scared, miserable group of prisoners, who all trooped together to the doorsill and looked out upon an angry, wild sweep of waters, a shining, drenched island, a blessed bit of sun just above the horizon. Steps, boats, trees, there were none. As soon as it was practicable they all thankfully set foot on *terra firma* again, and were not above thanking the good God, who had preserved them "in the midst of so many and such great dangers," led by Mr. Norton. Candy Doll ran off like a lapwing as soon as she was liberated. They could see her scudding along the beach, barefooted, bareheaded, her skirts fluttering in the wind, her arms held up above her head.

"Such a wild thing," said Mr. Norton. "But what are we to do? I see nothing for it but to wait here until we are sent for. Caruthers was to get home last night. He will be sure to come in search of us now that the storm is over. But what is this?"

This was Candy Doll, who now rushed toward them and dropped at their very feet, her eyes almost out of their sockets, her rabbit's foot clutched in her right hand, her hair literally on end, and no figure of speech about it, her face wearing the peculiar ashy pallor of her race when badly frightened.

"What's the matter? What is it?" asked Mr. Norton, and getting no answer he seized the child and repeated the question.

"Ober yander — fish — bigger dan de house — O Lord! O Lord!" was all the poor child could gasp out, and then she threw herself down and buried her face in the sand, beat her head against the earth, and drummed violently with her legs in the extremity of her mortal terror.

Off started Mr. Norton in a brisk run, not indeed believing the report, but expecting to see a porpoise beached by the storm. But in a little while Mrs. Norton heard him shouting loudly for her, and the entire family party ran with varying degrees of swiftness down to the inlet. And there, plainly visible to all eyes, was as magnificent a specimen of the genus whale as ever sported off the coast of Labrador, moving like a majestic mountain among the shallow breakers of the inlet.

CHAPTER IV

ALL THE WORLD SEES A PRISONER, AND CANDY DOLL A PROPHET

THERE was the whale and no mistake, though such a thing had never happened before in the history of the county. Before they had done with him nothing could have exceeded the anxiety and determination of the entire community to get rid of the fine fellow ; but at first, great was the joy over him. Corporations quarreled over him ; counties repudiated him ; thousands of people who had rejoiced over him turned from him in utter disgust eventually ; but when it was known that a whale had been washed into the inlet of Curlew Island (one of nature's traps), everybody was delighted. The whole population first turned out to see him. Rival museums put in bids for him. Scientists studied him ; sailors and soldiers wrangled over the privilege of catching him ; soap-factories and companies coveted him. Merchants forsook their offices for him ; bank officers, even, took a holiday to view him. In all

the countryside no one was so poor, old, busy, lame, sick, feeble, young, but that he or she could go to Curlew Island, when once the news got abroad. The very blind came to "see" what they could as well have heard described at home by their own firesides, and only a few good-natured folk, of the class generally regarded as "no-account," took the trouble to tell them anything about the wonderful monster, when they got there, so curious and busy was everybody in gazing and gazing upon and gossiping about the wonderful visitor. It was not surprising, then, that the Nortons forgot all about going home; about being succored by Mr. Caruthers; that Mr. Norton seized the first boat that appeared and repaired to the nearest telegraph station to communicate with the authorities, who no more believed him at first than he had believed Candy Doll; that fräulein took off her goggles, and got out her general information about whales for the benefit of her charges; that the boys could not listen for excitement, darting here and there continually with exclamations and cries of interest and delight; that Candy Doll declared that she had "seen Jonah;" that people soon began to ooze from every fen, and marsh, and field, and farm, and town for twenty miles around, and soon made an im-

promptu bridge of boats between the island and the back country, as they hastily cast anchor and rushed ashore.

All that day the mighty monster swam uneasily about a considerable body of water which yet must have seemed to him as but a tank, heading this way and that, trying to find his familiar home, the ocean.

But he could never get over the bar, of course, and next day appeared a great collection of men,—ship-captains, engineers, fishermen, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, planters, negroes,—and two or three boats were manned and sallied forth to attack the poor bewildered prisoner, who, nevertheless, gave a good account of himself when the time came. With quite a mild flap of his tail, he wiped out two boats and seven men; and in spite of all the ropes with which he was bound, when he began to be harpooned, and towed, and worried, and wounded, he gave such dashes and lashes, such leaps and bounds, he spouted so superbly, and fought so bravely, that a more interesting and dangerous capture was never made. It was remembered and recalled and romanced about, recorded, exaggerated, enjoyed, for years afterwards by everybody who had taken, or imagined that they had any share in it whatever, from Candy Doll, who discovered him, to Captain

Hewitt, who commanded the small fleet of boats engaged.

When the poor creature was finally landed on the beach, and man, whom he had never injured, had done his worst by him, in the way of contemptuously prying open his noble jaws, measuring him, disemboweling him, carrying away all of him that was desired in the way of teeth, oil, bones, and what not,—an affair at which Waggles assisted with alert intelligence and evident enjoyment,—the whale's revenge began, and a fine, searching, wholesale revenge it was, too, for the stench from his carcass filled whole counties with an intolerable horror in the way of a smell; and now no one was bold enough to visit the mighty fallen one save the carion that hovered like a cloud over him. Daddy Dick, who was in one of the boats, always maintained that he killed him. Fräulein classified him, and wrote an account of him for the "*Garten Laube*," for which she subscribed, and in which she delighted. Candy Doll became the heroine of the countryside, and it is to be hoped that kind Heaven forgave her all the stories she told about her share in the transaction all her life long. She promptly donned the yellow sunbonnet again, when Mr. Caruthers duly appeared (the second day after

the one on which he was expected), and Lucy it was who this time pulled up the pig-tail through the hole on top of the crown for her, saying, “ You found the whale, Candy Doll, and I am going to help you whenever you want me to.”

“ Hello, Caruthers ! You are just in time, I can tell you, for we only came over for the day, you know, and we have been here three days, marooning as best we could and living off the neighbours. I suppose you have seen the whale ? Oh, yes, of course, you went there first. We ’ve all seen it ; seen nothing else ; heard nothing else ever since we came. But Candy Doll here is the only person who has seen Jonah. Tell Mr. Caruthers what he looks like, child,” said Mr. Norton.

Whereupon Candy Doll, I regret to say, gave the most full, private, and particular account of the great prophet as he first appeared to her, “ riding de whale.”

“ You see you have missed a great deal, Caruthers. That will do, Candy Doll ; you can go now. And you need n’t wear that bonnet any more. All you need for your complexion is a whale. You ’ll find Mrs. Norton inside, Caruthers, and precious glad to see you, I can tell you.”

“ Little Keith has fever, and we have no quinine

with us, and we are anxious to get home," said Mrs. Norton ; " I 'll just pick up things and get ready to start. I wonder where those boys of mine are."

Mr. Caruthers, who was a perfect type of a discreet, prudent young Virginian, had not lived in the South five years for nothing. He took a small quinine pill every morning of his life, as regularly as his bath, had a box of them in his pocket at the time, and at once proceeded to administer one to the curly-haired, sweet little fellow, of whom he was so fond ; and presently the boys were found at the other end of the Island, where they had been catching fiddlers and a goodly number of crabs, and were so burnt that Mabel used up, in her kind, mothering fashion, a whole bottle of Pond's Extract on blistered legs, and then only heard, " Ouch ! " from one or other of them all during the pull home, as they moved about in the boat. As Daddy Dick's and Sam's and Daniel's swift, vigorous strokes sent them flying through the waterways, Mr. Norton bade the men sing, and as there never was a negro who could not sing, so there never can be found two or three gathered in the same place that one does not hear wonderful part-singing. Tune, time, are not only beautifully kept, but all the harmonies of the different parts correctly invented and given

in voices that are often exquisite in tone, color, body, sweetness,—voices that if they were set in white bodies and given the instruction of European masters, would make fame and fortune for their fortunate possessors. Mr. Caruthers, who was passionately fond of music, and fräulein, who was skilled in it, listened with delight as the trio “raised de chune o’ Pharaoh hose,” and rolled out :—

“ An’ did n’t ole Pharaoh hose git lawss, git lawss, in dat Red Sea !
An’ did n’t ole Pharaoh hose git lawss, git lawss, in dat Red
Sea —

In dat Red Sea; in dat Red Sea; O, ho-o-o, O, ho ! *Sing, Sam !* ”

in delightful accord ; Candy Doll and Youpam joining in the chorus with the same taste and talent, even at their age.

“ I heard a quartette of men singing hymns the other day on Colonel Merriman’s place, and I give you my word that I have never heard such voices in my life, though I ’ve been to all the large cities, and have heard all the great singers of the day who have come to this country. There are no fogs, no east winds, no colds, no throat troubles down here, and that doubtless gives that wonderful timbre and mellow beauty that one hears among the colored people ; but how can such rude, untutored creatures as these plantation ‘hands’ get their thirds and

fifths so accurately by instinct?" said Mr. Caruthers to fräulein when the song ceased, a jubilant shout, floating off and off across the water.

"It is de gift of de All-Good to dese His poor, despised children,—one of de most refined and beautiful of dem all, and not reserved, instead, for de conceited, selfish, dominant races what would all have, and would leave for dem nodings in art as in Africa," replied fräulein. "Pouf! But de white man can spell one wort bot' ways, 'grab' and 'brag.'"

"Mamma, Frank will certainly be out of the boat in another minute unless you speak to him," complained Mabel, who was always all eyes and ears for the younger children, as became an "eldest."

"I won't at all; Mabel is always bothering. I was just letting my hands run through the water a bit. There is no harm in that," said Frank.

"Change places with him, Lucy," commanded Mr. Norton. "Go over there by your mother, Frank, and don't forget again that your mother does not like to see you do that."

"Miss Mabel is extremely good and kind to you youngsters, I can tell you," said Mr. Caruthers, "and you'd better try to deserve it; not many boys have such a sister."

Mabel blushed prettily, hearing herself thus kindly praised by her clever tutor, and blushed again more deeply still when he added, "I'll be bound she has a pair of scissors and a book of court plaster and sticking plaster in her pocket for those boys this minute. I'd wager anything that she has."

"I have," said Mabel, laughing, as she drew them out,—a laugh that the boys developed into a loud guffaw.

It was nearly, indeed quite dark by the time they entered Bolton's Cut, the sun having dropped, with the sudden plunge of the tropics, behind the big trees on Howard's Island; and now the children reached down in the boat to get out a whole collection of cat-tails mysteriously stored there and steeped in kerosene, also some lanterns with colored papers twisted about them. With these they made what they called "a grand triumphant entry" into Milford's Cut, and then into the waterway of the Carlton property, and so on, up to the "Neosha" landing.

"Keith is fast asleep, poor boy, and I am as stiff as a rheumatic old woman of ninety. I wonder if Maumer Oney has a good supper for us," said Mrs. Norton, as Mr. Norton picked up the sleeping child and bore him across the lawn.

Little Maria was polishing the deer's antlers and the mahogany furniture in the hall as they entered it.

"She has n't touched it since I went away," thought Mrs. Norton, and said aloud, "Well, Maria, has everything gone all right at home? Where is Maumer Oney?"

"We thought you was daide," replied Little Maria, in a low tone of mournful enjoyment. Life was a luxury of woe to her, always. When asked how she felt, she had always "a misery somewhere;" if whether she was coming or going anywhere, her reply was invariably, "Ef I'm livin'," though she was in the prime of life, in the most perfect health, and in *her* wildest spirits.

Meanwhile Candy Doll was holding Maumer Oney and the audience in the kitchen spell-bound by her account of the adventures through which they had passed, and the Nortons were only too thankful to find themselves again in their delightful home, to get their suppers and go to bed, leaving Daddy Dick to swing the boats up in the boat-house and betake himself to his "fa'am."

CHAPTER V

A GOOD RESOLUTION KEPT

"I wowed a wow that night on Curlew Island. I said" — began fräulein.

"You did *what?*?" asked Frank, honestly misunderstanding her, and unmindful of Mabel's frown.

"Wowed a wow," repeated fräulein.

"Vowed a vow, she means, Frank. Do hush," whispered Mabel.

"I said I would something do for the sailors who come in here from all parts of the world — derefore — I morst. When I say something like dat — when I feel like dis — I *morst*. Gif me your counsulations, derefore, Madame Norton, — what can I do ?"

The children smiled and Mabel again frowned. Fräulein spoke, wrote, taught French, German, Italian, Latin, in the schoolroom admirably, being a highly educated woman. But out of it she would speak what she called "Anglisch." She was a skilled musician, and played both the piano and harp well,

but she seemed to regard all these accomplishments as matters of course ; she was vain only of her “Anglisch,” and bored Mr. Caruthers dreadfully with it. It was very funny to see them together, — he so anxious to “practice speaking German,” she equally determined to “improve in de tongue of Shakespeare.” He had a horror of “South German,” she was terribly afraid of the President’s American ; and I am afraid that the Norton children amused themselves a good deal over the pair. Edward and Mabel kept the younger children down somewhat, but Frank certainly taught fräulein a whole lot of archaic stuff that had not been heard since Shakespeare’s day, persuading her that it was in general use, and he was giving her a valuable cockney education when his father found it out and punished him. Frank did not feel it necessary to own that he had been weeks at it, and sniggered with delight when fräulein addressed a neighbor who called as “Noble Lady,” and her husband, an ex-Confederate, as “Brave Knight,” in accordance with his private instructions, backed up by the standard edition of Sir Walter Scott. Fräulein never did get it out of her head that “varlet” was a singularly appropriate title for servants in general, and “By my halidome” became her favorite exclamation.

"I ain't no varlet, I 'm a culled pusson," Daddy Dick said to her once in high displeasure, thrusting out his lip tremendously, and rolling his eyes angrily at "de gubberness."

"So," said fräulein, falling back on her own tongue.

But to return. Mrs. Norton's advice was this. Money was to be made, she knew, by shipping moss to a certain address in Baltimore; fräulein could take lame Gabriel and the children, collect it, dry it, sell it, ship it, and give the proceeds to the Sailors' Home in Savannah.

Being a thrifty European soul, fräulein was much delighted with the idea, and went to work with all her own faithful, plodding industry to carry it out. She studied the moss first, classified it as "tillandsia," put it under her microscope, pressed it in her herbarium, and really taught the children to see it for the first time. The party spent a great many pleasant afternoons in the woods together about this work,—time not thrown away for any of them, for fräulein not only made a hundred and twenty dollars for her mission, but collected specimens of all the flora of the country, and Edward eventually sold his carefully prepared, accurate herbarium in Germany for a thousand dollars, while all the little

Nortons learned to botanize in the course of her explorations and collections.

It chanced one day that they found themselves near Daddy Dick's farm, and being hot and tired, they concluded to see if they could get some buttermilk. The little dismal cabin, set on the edge of a swamp full of dead pine-trees, looked melancholy enough to fräulein, who mentally contrasted the house and scenery with the mountains and châlets of her native canton in Switzerland. But the children hailed Anna, Daddy Dick's young wife, who was hoeing in the field, and proceeded to overrun the place with her consent and encouragement. They hunted for eggs; they cut a watermelon; they paid a visit to "Linkum," and fed him to repletion on cabbages, besides pulling his tail, swarming up on his back, and going for rides. They ran races, pumped water, jumped over everything low, crawled under everything that was high, and finally sat down, exhausted, to eat the sweet potatoes which Anna had good naturedly roasted for them in the coals, with some hoe-cakes.

"I'll get no moss from dem to-day," said fräulein to Anna, as she followed her into the cabin.

Here was a little simple, poor furniture (a clean bed decked with a gay counterpane, a table, stove,

chairs), a string of red peppers hung across the beams, some pot-herbs also. There was a pile of vegetables in one corner. On a peg on the wall hung a very handsome white Leghorn hat, trimmed with the most expensive ostrich feathers and ribbons,— a hat for a Princess.

“Dat’s my new hat,” explained Anna, taking it down and eyeing it with pride.

Fräulein looked at Anna, fresh from her potato-patch, looked around the cabin, shrugged her shoulders, and exclaimed,—

“What a ridiculousness!”

This remark sounded to Anna like high praise, and she was so much pleased that she went into a battered trunk and picked out a blue satin dress, trimmed with cotton lace.

“Thou loved Heaven!” exclaimed fräulein, who was not used to seeing such things in such places and believed in sumptuary laws.

Then she corrected her natural wish to make her own comments and said gently:—

“I will not lecturefy thee. If the All-Good allows thee these wanities, I will not wex myself nor thee. We have all our foolishments, my good woman;” a speech which so puzzled Anna that she fairly stared at her visitor. Looking about her, fräulein

beheld outside on the little rickety porch about which Anna's pigs were rooting, and on which her hens were straying, an immensely old man, seated in a cane-bottomed rocking chair, Grand-Daddy Mose. He got up, scraped his right foot, and pulled his forelock, as he greeted her, and would have remained standing, but fräulein would not allow this.

"It is I who stand before the aged," she said. "Take again your seat, and resume your ease in your house, my friend."

"De Cunnle, he mek me sit down allus," said Daddy Mose, falling back into the chair from which he had risen with so much effort.

"Dat boy of mine got a fine fa'am, ma'am, here,—a fine fa'am."

Fräulein looked out at the dead pines, the scant grass, the melancholy garden, the lean pigs, and in at the cabin. She thought of the really fine farms she had seen in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, England, and sighed; then she smiled,—a smile that made her homely features lovely for the moment.

"Good is our God. It is for you, that. The rich only are widout content, possessing too much. Are all the people of your race like you, so simple, und well pleased?"

Before Daddy Mose could answer, in trooped all the children.

"You have been making friends with Daddy Mose, I see. He is a wonderful old man,—over a hundred,—and he knows lots of things that we don't," said Mabel. "Don't you, Daddy Mose?"

"Mebbe," replied the old man meekly; "de ole is boun' to git some sense in 'em of de Lord's givin', by de time dey done loss all dey had of dere own what *dey* call gumption."

"Yes, Daddy Mose has made some great discoveries, fräulein. He is an ethnologist, and has discovered the origin of the white race and of the black race. Tell our governess, tell us, Daddy Mose, about — you know — that story of yours?"

Thus urged, the old man cleared his throat, and spread his bandanna on his knee. At this moment another old man came in sight and an old woman. They joined the group on the porch. The Norton children perched anywhere and everywhere. A chair was brought for fräulein by Anna, and with a deprecating but earnest look Daddy Mose began his tale:—

"My bruddah and sistah, I bin in dishyer worl' long time befo' de Newnion come een,—long time befo' Gin'l Grant, an' Shumman run Gin'l

Lee an' Mass' Elliott off Sulliman Ilan'. I bin a preachin' de wud o' de Spirit when *all* youah bin in slaberyment, and I gwineter lucidation to-day how Adam git leff by Nigerdemus, an' how 'e come to pass dat de *fuss* Buckrah walk 'pun top o' de ert. Ahem—ahem! De whole ting come to pass someting like o' *dis*: De Lord been a-walk in de gyahd'n diss about de cool o' de day wid he beevah hat an' he walkin'-cane. De big horn done blow, an *all* de han' bin a-sit down, rasslin' wid de cole bittle, an' a-trowin' an' a-ketchin' foolishness one to anurrer. Same like dat de voice o' de Lord *soun' out* like de *lite'nin'* in de *nite*. De Lord tu'n short in de paht troo' de orchard, an' bin a walk ober by de rice-fiel' dam. Soon ez he git by dat wintah apple-tree, he stan' up *stock still*, an' gaze 'pun um wid *grate* expishun. 'T ain't a han' on de place what ain't drop de kittle an' spoon an' ting, an' gaze good fashion, all in a trimble like, on de good Massah. De bittle puah stan' like 'e *freeze* in ebrybody mout. By and by, diss like I tell you, all to once de ert rock, an' de sky split wid de *powerfulness* o' de *grateness* o' de Lord. He bex till de bexness o' he spirit set all de people to *crawlin'* on dey face. Nieder Buckrah, nieder so Nigger, kin *biggin* fuh to onderstan' de tribulashun an' de terrificashun o' *dat*

day, whichin 't was 12 o'clock. De hoss an' mule leff de plough an' scatterate to de pine lan', same like a passel o' pahtridge when one pinter rout um, an' you shoot *two* barrel *one* time an' ain't touch a feddah. De sky cloud up, an' de big rain stan' same like a ripe persimmun ready fuh drop. De squirrel mek track fuh he hole, an' when he git dere he tu'n roun' in he hole an' he trow 'e eye back, same like 'e bin a watch one o' deze yer half-fice an' half-houn' a-rumblin' an' a-rummigin' roun' in de hickory ticket. All dem jay-bud an' ting stop dem singin' on account uv he done scade mos' *to det*, an' de owl shet he eye *tight* fuh de *fuss* time sence he *bawn*. De ribber Jawdon rize up an' *bile* wid a *grate* freshet, an' Babylon shake same like a broom-grass fiel'. Oh, my childern, 't was *turrible*, and to dis day Adam face stan' white, same like Mass' Steve Elliott face. Oh, my sistah, stan' up to me like a man while I onrabble de ponderashun o' dat fuss trial, whichin it eber sence mek de en' uv a corn row on a hot summah day seem 'bout as long to oonah as *spang* fum Yemmassee *plum* to Coosehatchee. Now, dis is de Bible troot regyahd'n o' how Adam face tu'n white, 'cord'n' to how 'e specify in de one-eye chapter o' de two-eye John. Now, John de Baptiss say, sez he, sez John : Adam bin a *cullud*

pussen, an' he dress up in coon-skin, and eat locus' an' wile honey ; an' howsumeber, de Lord ain't truss Adam *nohow*, kaze he had dealin's wid um *befo'*, an' he know say he bin *dearly* lub all dem *watermillyun* an' ting what a-bin a-grow in de gyahd'n ; so he call Adam an' he say to um, sez he : ' Boy, deze yer wintah apple ain't fuh *tech* till nex' summah,' an' atter de Lord *gie* de awdah he leff Adam, but he leff Gabriel an' Nigerdemus, he cousin on he murrer side, fuh watch um, kaze he hab one *bad* kar-aktah fuh trickiness an' cunnin'ness. Oh, my sistah, lissen at me good an' yeddi fuh youah self how dat wintah apple-tree come to mek de *fuss* Buckrah fambly in Scriptcha. Now, John de Baptiss say, sez he, sez John : Diss ez quick ez de Lord gone outen de gate Gabriel an' Nigerdemus tek a stan' fuh watch de tree. Oh, my bruddah, when Adam tink say he kin trow duss in Nigerdemus' eye an' Gabriel *all to one time*, he diss ez well try fuh hook one o' dem Guinea fowl in de *broad* daylight, nieder so, fuh *borrow* one watermillyun what ain't blongst to um. Kaze why ? kaze, sez he : Nieder Gabriel, nieder so Nigerdemus, *sleep* till he kech Adam bin a-chuhkin' de wintah apple down wid a lite-wood knot. Now, what nex', sez he ? De nex' pint is what I done tell you fuhm de *fuss* gwine off. Ni-

gerdemus tell de Lord 'bout Adam, an' sho' nuff, de good Massah come back to de tree an' he miss two apple. He look roun' 'pun top o' de groun', an' he see Adam track way he bin a-muze 'bout underneat de tree. Den de spirit o' de Lord *git bex*, an' he call out: 'Adam,' but Adam ain't say a god-blessed ting. Oh, my sistah, Adam bin a-lay down wid he face burry in de groun' in one huckleberry ticket, an' he scade so much ez to kech he bret. Den de Lord git mo' powfull wid he voice, an' Adam bleege to git up, an' he mek answer good fashion, an' he say: 'Yeh, Lord.' Den de Lord say: 'Adam, somebawdy tief one wintah apple.' Den Adam up an' say: 'Yeh, Lord,' an' he face tu'ns white ez a fine white homespun sheet in one white fahmby house. Den de Lord say: 'Adam, I miss de apple, an' I know say tis tief in dis gyahd'n.' Den de spirit o' de debbil jump 'pon Adam, an' he say: 'Lord, if de apple *is* tief, as you *say* tis tief, den I tink say mus' be Eve tief um.' Den Nigerdemus took an' cut into de composishun, an' he pint wid de butt o' he musket to Adam track, an' he say: 'Adam, dat's a number *nine* shoe, an' you know say Eve ain't got *no sich a* foot.' Den Adam see he ain't hab no witness, an' no use fulh 'tarrogate Nigerdemus, so he jump ober de fence wid

he white face, an' hide in de cypress swamp till atter dahk, den he dig dut fuh de white people country ; whichin, as he say, sez he, at de fuss commencement, all Adam chillun by he fuss wife is cullud, 'cepshun to he secon' wife, whichin all de ress is Buckrah.

"Now, sistah Lucy, raise de chune o' Pharaoh hose."

"An' did n't ole Pharaoh hose git lawss, git lawss, in dat Red Sea !
An' did n't ole Pharaoh hose git lawss, git lawss, in dat Red Sea —
In dat Red Sea, in dat Red Sea; O, ho-o-o, O, ho. *Sing, my sistah,*"
etc.

But not one word of this original and characteristic recital, scarcely, could fräulein understand, for Daddy Mose spoke the Congo-English dialect of his race in Carolina, which was not fräulein's "Anglisch" at all. But when Mabel gave her version of it as they walked home, she was immensely amused and interested.

"Ach ! It is that old human nature. It is that old human nature," she would say with a chuckle of delight. "If all goes well, good ; if not, it is God's fault always. And that number nine shoe ! Ach ! Had only sin never come into our beautiful world, we had never been black — and says the good Mose, never white."

CHAPTER VI

A FAIR IN THE FAIR MONTH OF MAY

IT was the custom of the Nortons to go every year to the town of Smithville, fifty miles distant, when and where a local society interested in agricultural matters was wont to make an exhibit of the result of their theories and practices. Being one of the originators of this society, Mr. Norton was very warmly interested in all that concerned it, and his family so shared his enthusiasm that they not only generally accompanied him on these occasions, but were always competing for the prizes offered at the show. This year, for instance, Mabel had put in several jars of fig preserves for exhibition, Edward had with him a famous pair of homing pigeons, the best in the South, Lucy had crocheted an afghan under fräulein's direction, Frank had sent off in Daddy Dick's care his beloved colt; even little Keith had entered a novel hummingbird caught by him in the garden. So it was with great alacrity that the family started off for Smithville. Fräulein was taken along, partly to maintain order, but chiefly for the jaunt.

"You must come too and see us all take all the prizes," said Frank, who was of a hopeful turn of mind — ("a very clever, bookish boy, but conceited," Mr. Caruthers said). "I've been feeding 'Frisk' on cotton-seed cake and grooming him myself and giving him bran mashes, and there will not be anything to compare with him, I know, and Edward is sure of a first prize. Nash can make 1767 yards a minute the hundred miles, and Phœbe and Lex are even swifter. Such beauties as they are, snow-white save for tips of color, and so intelligent, so really affectionate. Phœbe has twice gone from here to Baltimore with messages for the Dawsons, our great friends there, and brought us back their answers, and his favorite of them all, Lex, has flown as far as Staten Island, to the club-house there, and beaten the record. Edward made fifteen dollars last season selling homing pigeons, and I daresay he 'll make twenty this. Why does Mabel exhibit those rubbishy preserves of hers? Why did n't she do a water-color sketch, or something that would be a credit to the family?"

"Mabel's sketches are bad — very bad. Her preserves are delicious. Better is good cooking than bad art. When she is a *haus-frau*, her husband and her children will more enjoy nice dishes on the table

than poor pictures on the wall. This I tell you ; and her bread ! It is a poem ! Your mother is very wise to teach her all the usefulnesses that she knows," replied fräulein. "I much believe in bakeology, und boilology, und roastology, und cleanology, und patchology, und darnology ! A woman more needs that education than any other. I teach the biano, und the language, und all dat, because mawthers will have ; but when I go home I am again cook, house-maid, seamstress—woman — und I am nefer so happy ! I have also made for de show a sweet nut-cake with the Bear of Bearne on it ; think you that I will get a prize ?" said fräulein, smiling amiably at the boy.

"I hope so, fräulein. But you will have all the farmers' wives and daughters competing for it ; it is ten dollars — so little," replied Frank.

"Think you that a small sum ? Think of all the bread it would buy, the fire, the clothes, the lodging. If you had ever been poor in Europe, you would not so say. The Royal Prince wid us thinks more as once before he spends two gold pieces. Here Anna puts them into a hat and cares not. But you Americans trow de money away wid bot' de hands, and den often in old age go begging. For thirty years I am every year laying by money for my lame sister

und so she und I should have not to depend on od-
ers; so when we get very old und sit like two old
cats by our fireside, it should be our own fire und
loaf, und cloak. Oh, it is terrible in Europe to be
poor! You cannot imaginiate it. But not always
can you so live here; so little work, so little save, so
much spend. Five dollars for candy at one time,
und de husband a clerk! Real lace und diamonds
und silks und feders, und de wife governess like
me, de husband invalid — tree children — in de
bank, in property, noding! If I should get wid
my Bearne cake ten dollars, I will be very glad!
I will my little money-order send home, ya! I will
say, ‘Dis de doctor will pay in sickness’ (loved
Heaven, keep it away, till I have a little more laid by
of my yearnings); ‘Dis will a little holiday make in
convalescence;’ ‘Dis will some good books buy for
de long winter evening;’ ‘Dis will de light provide;’
‘Dis will de neighbor help.’ So little! It is much
— much,” said fräulein, her fingers flying with her
knitting. “Five hundred dollars have I earned in
ten years wid dese needles in de half-hours und
hours what all de Americans waste — de five min-
utes — de railroad journey — de picnic. Wid it, I
have bought my bit of pasture land for de cow what
— which shall be. Is not that much more better as

laziness? Many things I hate, but most of all laziness und lies."

When they got to Smithville, and put up at the hotel, great was the eagerness of the party to see the show in general, and their exhibit in particular. Even Mrs. Norton was wondering if they had given her tenth-century lace the place of honor in the needlework department; and Lucy and Frank fidgeted fräulein into a fever, almost, before they were all ready to go to the fair grounds.

Arrived there, they found a large and promiscuous kind of crowd, huge placards saying that "the Honorable Robert Todd would address the people at a barbecue to be held next day at Silver Spring;" other notices about the prizes and committees; a whirligig; a balloon ascension in course of preparation; — all the usual "attractions" of such meetings.

The Nortons went at once to the show-rooms, all except Mr. Norton, who put on a linen "duster" and made first for the cattle-stalls, where he punched ribs, and discussed breeds and weights, ages, values, for hours, with other equally enthusiastic farmers. Mabel's round cheeks flushed crimson when she found that her fig preserves had got "honorable mention;" her bread, a blue ribbon. Edward even got quite excited, and lost his usual calmness, when

he found that Lex had got the gold medal of the Southern Homing Association. Lucy wept copiously over an unappreciated Afghan ; Frank sulked all day, finding his colt "nowhere," his pains and oil-cake wasted, his hopes utterly blighted. Mrs. Norton's lace was not officially noticed at all. But fräulein's wonderfully realistic, indeed artistic, nut Bear of Bearne had been awarded ten dollars, and later was eagerly devoured by the children, who found him as good to eat as he was to look at.

"I think it is a shame ! My colt turned down, and fräulein's silly cake awarded a prize ! It is n't fair, mamma, at all. The judges must be perfect idiots !" grumbled Frank ; "and anybody can make fig preserves. And there 's lots of loaves of bread that look as nice and nicer than Mabel's. As for Edward, he always gets all the prizes."

"Don't let your disappointment make you envious and unjust, my boy. To rejoice heartily and unselfishly with a winner, where one has lost what one coveted, is the best prize of all. My clever boy will win with other exhibits, at other shows, no doubt ; but to-day I would have him cheerful and resigned to the judges' decision, kind and sympathetic to his brother and sister ; then he may be surpassed in colts, but not in manliness and generosity," said

Mrs. Norton, putting her arm around the lad affectionately.

"But, mamma, it is so hard. I was so sure I'd win."

"So you can, my boy ; I've shown you how."

"But I so wanted that prize, and I've taken such pains ; but if I go grinning and congratulating, I'll only be a humbug. I can't help feeling bitter and unhappy about it to save my life."

"I know, dear. But there is nothing as bad as being bad, as bitter as being bitter. Come, son, try to put it all aside and be kind to the others, and you will see how it helps you," Mrs. Norton insisted.

"I could bear anything better than the Bear taking a prize and my colt not even noticed," burst out Frank in a suppressed sob, half anger, half grief. "That old burnt sugar bear, instead of my beautiful Frisk. It's a perfect shame ! I don't see what we want with so many foreigners for anyway, in this country."

"You've got into a fret, son. Sit down here until you get quiet ; read me about the balloon ascension," said tactful Mrs. Norton. They would have been a good deal more interested in their handbill, had they known that at that moment Keith had taken advantage of the intense absorption of

the family mind to slip outside, get himself tied around the waist and neck with one of the balloon-ropes by another boy, and was just then sweeping past the second story window, dangling from the car. A roar from the crowd, "Look at the kid!" "A child's gone up!" "Whose child is that?" "Catch that rope!" reached them.

Mrs. Norton went to the window, and there fell down in a faint on the floor, for her mother-eyes had beheld Keith's red plaid kilt in the distance, and she knew what had happened. There was a tremendous uproar, of course. The crowd swayed over the place like so many ants, when boiling water has been poured over them. Everybody cried out, shrieked, commanded at once, followed the floating car, and trembled for the child. But, fortunately, it was but a preliminary trial of the balloon, and the learned professor in charge managed to get hold of the right rope, and, with the help of his assistant in the car, soon deposited Keith in the next field but one. A general anxious rush towards him, a general smiling return of the people, told the story. The child was frightened to death, but not hurt much,—thanks to his good angel. But he was examined, scolded, caressed, tipped (whipped eventually), embraced, in such rapid succession by onlook-

ers and his family that it is no wonder he looked perfectly bewildered during the remainder of their stay in Smithville. Mrs. Norton had hysterics over the affair, and was made so ill by it that Mr. Norton had not the heart to say more than, "I thought Keith was to be left at home in future?"

"As he will; I never shall let him out of my sight again, or bring him away from the plantation. I left him with fräulein, who gave him to Mabel, who forgot all about him in her excitement over the bread prize. That child is always in mischief. He climbed up the legs of Mr. Carlton's savage bull by the tail, and perched on his back, just before you came, fräulein; a bull that all the men dreaded to handle except with a pitchfork. I never would have brought him, but he cried so about it when he heard of the balloon ascension from Candy Doll that I weakly yielded. Oh, dear, that child will be the death of me yet," said Mrs. Norton. "Come here, my darling."

Mr. Norton now insisted that they should all return to the hotel, but himself stayed to superintend a flower-show in which he was interested.

The next day was devoted to the barbecue. It was held in some dense woods, near Silver Spring, and it was pleasant to see the thousands of smiling

people who trooped past them in holiday attire, to disappear among the magnificent groves of live oak near the spring.

They found hundreds of baskets and hampers of every kind placed near the rough board tables improvised for the occasion, and placing their own there, the Nortons hurried off like their neighbors to hear Colonel Todd's speech. It was a very long one, a very eloquent one; it was listened to with great respect and pleasure by the immense crowd. A Southern crowd likes nothing better than "a speakin'," catches readily every premise the speaker makes, responds to every note touched, appreciates every point made, having been used for generations to good speeches. Mr. Norton got seats for the party, and greatly enjoyed the eloquence of his friend, Colonel Todd. Fräulein understood little of what was going on, and caring less for the political issues, walked back to the grove and amused the children who were swinging there, playing games, and filching from the baskets. Mrs. Norton, fan in hand, sat out the whole thing, in spite of the heat, to please Mr. Norton. The younger children went off with Mr. Caruthers, much to Mabel's envy. Edward folded his arms and gave himself up to what a gentleman near him called "the colonel's magnificent effort."

Mrs. Norton found Daddy Dick near her, as, in common with her husband and the crowd, she made her way back to the grove.

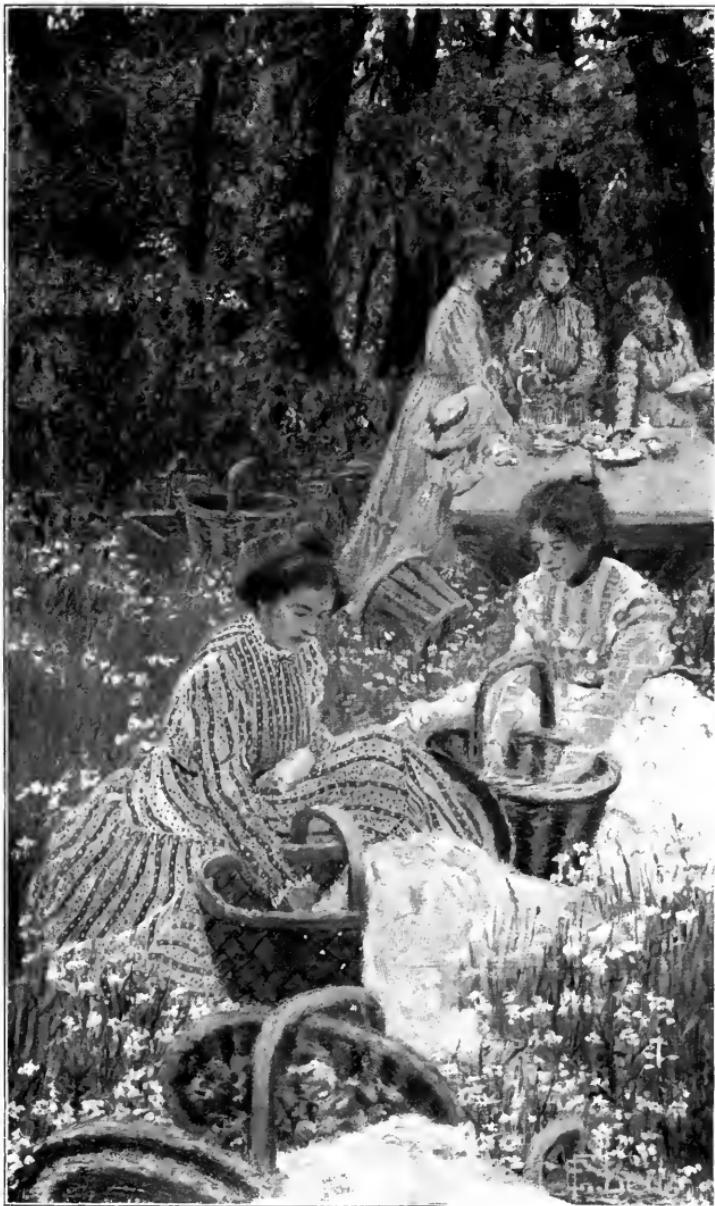
"Well, Daddy Dick, what did you think of that speech?"

"He mek a fine speech, ma'am. He mek a gran' speech. You could a-heerd him bellowin' for a mile. An' listen how you might, with all your ears, you could n't onderstan' *him*," replied he, with great unction and earnestness. Like some other people, Daddy Dick was much impressed by what he did not understand.

Presently Frank, and Lucy, and Keith, and Mabel were looking with intense interest upon the preparations that were now made to feed the multitude. Long trenches were dug, and fires were built in them. Carts drove up, and from them were taken whole beeves already dressed, pigs, turkeys, chickens, lambs. These were dressed, stuffed, put on poles of varying size and length, and suspended above the trenches to cook.

"Oh, is n't this fun!" cried Frank presently, highly delighted.

"Don't they smell delicious! I am so hungry," agreed Mabel. "Where is Keith? He will fall in the fire next!"



"A BANQUET FOR THE GODS"

"I've got him, Miss Mabel. Give yourself no further anxiety about him. I am under bonds to deliver him safely at Neosha to-morrow, object and sulk and squirm as he will," said Mr. Caruthers.

"They are going to turn them over: look out!" cried Frank. The hot grease spluttered high, and the flames leaped higher, as two negro men, not without some difficulty, seized the poles and reversed a huge animal already beginning to brown most temptingly. It was a fascinating sight to the children and to many others, and they did not leave the spot till the smoking victims were heaped on wooden trenchers and carried off to the tables, under the dense, grateful shade of the oaks. A scene of cheerful, enjoyable confusion followed, as the thousands of people present unpacked the "goodies" they had brought, and a fine show the aggregate made. "'A banquet for the gods,' it would have been thought in old Greece," said Mr. Caruthers to Mabel. "Now remember, please, that you are to eat something, and rest,—that I am to take your place and wait on the children."

The orator of the day took his place at the head of the central and longest table. A Methodist minister said grace. The crowd behaved with great reverence. The fray began. There were no seats, of course. Everybody stood around the table, and

taking what he or she wanted, enjoyed to the utmost the delicious things provided. Everybody waited on his or her neighbor. The utmost good humor prevailed ; there was no horse-play, elbowing, snatching, misbehaving. A Southern crowd dislikes all rowdyism on such occasions, is very law-abiding, and gentle and courteous. Fräulein was much struck by this.

“ I tought dere would be quarrels, und killings, but I nefer saw people more amiable und complaisant.”

She ate enormously, and oozed good nature, herself, from every pore. She waltzed with Lucy and Mabel in huge, swelling circles and bounds on the platform where the young people were dancing, as all Americans dance — beautifully ; and enjoyed the day hugely.

“ The *fête Américaine* is varry nice — varry — but for de sandflies und de fleas und de mosquitoes, und de flies what crawls over me in all parts dis minute. Pouf ! But what a wicked waste of food ! What was left would have fed half Switzerland for a week,” she said, as they left the noble group of trees, which had given shade and shelter to thousands of the moist but merry folk, now wending their way homeward, well content with the day’s fatigues and pleasures.

CHAPTER VII

“A COUNTRY FOOTING”

“HAVE you ever been to a cake-walk, fräulein ?” asked Mrs. Norton on the Monday following the barbecue. “Would you like to go to one ?”

“What is dat, madame ? What a gountry dis, where de child is Candy Doll, and de cake walks ! You are varry kind about it, I see, dough — tanks.”

“A cake-walk is a local institution, an amusement much in favor with the colored people, who, with a cake for a prize, seek to carry it off by superiority in walking and dancing. They are to have one tomorrow night for the benefit of the Baptist Church just on the edge of the plantation, and we must all go and swell the receipts as much as possible. Mau-mer Oney expects it of us,” replied Mrs. Norton.

“Big Maria is going to walk,” said Mabel, “with Sam for a partner.”

“Little Maria is going to walk, too, with Ned,” said Frank. “They’ve been practicing for weeks. I’ve seen them at it down at the quarters again and

again. Here, Lucy, get me a stick and a hat. I will show you how Ned walks. I can do most of the steps just as well as he does."

"Candy Doll says she is going to walk, too, with Youpam," put in Lucy, while she ran off to get the stick and hat. "I can walk, too, Frank. You need n't think that you are the only one. Candy Doll's steps are just lovely."

"*Epam*, you should say, Lucy," remarked Edward, — "*Epam*, not Youpam."

"Well, his mother calls him — 'You-pam? You-pam?' when he is out of the way, and she ought to know."

"Maybe his name is Pam," suggested Keith, who was playing on the floor.

"Epaminondas," corrected Edward firmly.

Lucy was now back, and with Frank began to show fräulein the steps they had learned from the servants at the quarters. But they were only ridiculed by Edward.

"You don't know how to do it! Just wait, fräulein, until you get over to the church, and then you will see walking! There will be fifty couples, and the cake weighs twenty pounds. Colonel Carlton's cook made it, and it is a regular Christmas out-and-outer, I tell you."

"But whyfore hold you de walk-cake in de church?" asked fräulein, justly scandalized.

"Oh, they don't mind that," said Mabel. "They mean no irreverence whatever."

The next night was fine, cool, moonlit, and the Nortons enjoyed their walk after supper over to the little frame building that did duty for a Baptist church. Mr. Norton had been persuaded by his wife to accompany them, and led the way with fräulein. Edward, with an air of much dignity and importance, escorted his mother. Frank and Lucy followed, chattering constantly. Waggles, bringing up the rear, was heard snuffing and barking violently as they skirted a rice-field, when about halfway. Presently they heard a howl,— a most piteous and prolonged howl. The ladies stopped short in the path. Mr. Norton and the boys hurried back, and there, on the edge of a borrow-pit, they found poor Waggles, with only a stump of a tail left! A sudden plunge on the part of some black object back into the water told its own tale, and while Mr. Norton was peering at it, a very horny, scaly alligator swam out into the moonlight, and dived out of sight.

"Why, Wag! Wag! Good fellow! Come here! Let us see!" said Mr. Norton, and the boys broke into cries of grief and distress over the accident to

their beloved playmate. Edward was sent on with the ladies. Mr. Norton and Frank carried Waggles tenderly back to the house, and skillfully bandaging a bloody stump, left him on the foot of Mrs. Norton's sofa, in Maumer Oney's charge, whimpering still, over the result of a bit of innocent curiosity about borrow-pits, grateful for the kindness shown him.

By the time they rejoined the other members of the party, the cake-walk was in full progress, and the elderly respectable colored men showed them to their seats,—the benches of the side aisles serving for this purpose, the central ones having been removed to make room for the walk. By the light which the kerosene lamps with tin reflectors ranged around the church gave, they could see a motley array of “the hands” clad in their Sunday best, and of their women-kind resplendent in blue, red, purple, pink, yellow dresses, and gorgeous hats,—regular flower gardens. But even these were outdone by the walkers. There were fifty couples, in all, dressed as fantastically as possible; all herded together at the end of the room. The children wriggled on their seats and exclaimed: “There is Big Maria! Look at her wreath of pink roses.”

“Ach! but that low-necked white muslin frock of hers makes an alto-relievo! Und the yellow

stockings ! Und the green sash ! Boor children ! Boor children ! ” said fräulein.

“ There ’s Little Maria, Mabel ! The one in the red silk and the purple hat. And is n’t Ned a swell ! His collar almost cuts off his ears. But he can dance with the best,” said Frank to Mabel.

“ And if there is n’t Candy Doll ! Look, Frank, over there with Youpam ! ” whispered Lucy to Frank. There she was, sure enough, and grinned a delighted recognition as she caught Lucy’s attention.

“ Well, her skin is all right *to-night*, that ’s certain,” said Edward.

“ Oh, mamma ! just look at Candy Doll. She is all over powder,” said Mabel.

“ She must have stuck her head in the flour barrel just before she left home,” said Frank.

“ And she has stained her cheeks with pokeweedberries. They all have, mamma,” said Mabel.

“ And is n’t her yellow frock pretty ? I gave her the lace for it, off my doll’s dress. And is n’t her wreath of chicken feathers beautiful ? I helped her make it. And I gave her that red necklace and her shoes ; and I think she looks too nice for anything,” remarked Lucy, contemplating with great satisfaction the results of her benevolent contributions to Candy Doll’s toilette.

Other couples had been giving an exhibition of their powers, muscles, fancies, feats, in walking and dancing during Mr. Norton's absence. Big Maria and Sam now turned themselves loose. Sam was the high jumper of the neighborhood. Big Maria excelled in lurching. Over she would go to the right or to the left, front or back, yet never lost her balance. The pair were famous for their combined lurches, bounds, leaps, pigeon-wings; and such sidlings, such mincings, such whirls, such wriggling, such shuffling, as no one could have imagined who had not seen them. Loud applause followed their earnest and ambitious efforts, and with a shake of her body Big Maria straightened her pink wreath, and smilingly retired on her laurels, leaning proudly on Sam's arm. Little Maria's turn now came, and with ineffable solemnity she took Ned's hand (a tall negro, clad all in funereal black) and began to show what she could do. Without having Big Maria's smiles, vivacity, agility, she yet contrived in her own slow, graceful fashion to win a great deal of admiration, while Big Maria looked on gloomily enough. There was no love lost between the two women ever, and as Little Maria dismally retired from the centre of the hall, she shot a glance of triumph at her rival. A grand circle of dancers was now formed, and the

fifty couples were a sight to see, as they sped around the church. The band, established near the door, and consisting of five skillful players, entered into the spirit of the thing entirely. Occasionally they would quicken the time ; occasionally decrease it ; sometimes alter the time ; sometimes stop outright, and thereby encourage, display to advantage, or confuse the walkers. And once when they stopped, Youpam fell on his knees, deposited his hat on the floor, and Candy Doll whirled, picked it up with the tips of her toes, kept it in the air fully five minutes as she did various steps with the utmost cleverness, and sent it with a fling finally right on top of Youpam's head. Lucy fairly shrieked with delight. The church bell at the door clanged out,— the deacons on the platform deliberated, disagreed. Another general competition followed, and the deacons had fully decided to give the cake to Little Maria, and were about to declare themselves, when an unwelcome interruption prevented.

In this last round Candy Doll (who was immediately behind Big Maria) took it into her wicked little head to imitate her predecessor. This she did with such success that a general roar of laughter and applause followed. This being misunderstood by Big Maria (who fancied that she was exciting

a tempest of admiration), she redoubled her efforts, and being as awkward as she was active, gave Candy Doll another opportunity. Undeceived at last by the jeers of the audience, Big Maria stopped, turned around, caught Candy Doll in the very act, seized her violently, shook her fiercely. Now Little Maria was just behind Candy Doll, as it chanced, and she advanced to the rescue, actually smiling for once. Cries of "You yeller hussy!" "You black nigger!" "Ef you come tribulatin' me"— "I ain't 'tarrogatin' you!" "Shet up!" "Quit!" "Git out!" "Take that!" "I 'llmek you laugh!" "Ef you tech me, I ain't sayin' what I 'll do to you!" "You think you can dance, don't you?" "Oh, Lawsy!" went up. The three couples were immediately involved in a general row, in which "the fur flew," as Edward put it. Candy Doll swung on to Big Maria's skirts, tore out her gathers, snatched off her wreath, kicked vigorously at her shins, and emerged from the encounter, thanks to Little Maria, Sam, and Youpam, victorious, but a total wreck as to her costume. Mr. Norton was scandalized, and marching up to the group soon put a stop to what he called "this disgraceful brawling," so far as his servants were concerned, by ordering them all home. When order was restored, the cake

was awarded to Little Maria, whereupon Big Maria burst into a storm of sobs and rushed out of the building, the deacons turned out the lights, the white family left ten dollars with Daddy Dick as they passed him on the steps, for what he called "de restorifications of de church," and the cake-walk was over.

When they got home Mrs. Norton saw a letter lying on the hall table. The boat was in, and numerous packages had come by it, but only this one letter.

"From Catharine," said Mr. Norton, as his wife pounced on it and sat down to read it at once.

"She is quite well, and, see here, dear, what do you think dear Catharine wishes? She says we must all come over by the first steamer, and spend three months with her before she goes to India. Oh, I should so like it! I quite long to go home after spending five years here. Don't you think we could manage it?" asked Mrs. Norton.

"Oh, do, papa!"

"Please do!"

"It would be so delightful, papa."

"It is getting so hot and unhealthy here! We shall have to go somewhere, you know, papa."

"Oh, please do!" cried all the children in turn.

"Well, so be it. There is no reason why you should not go if you wish it. But I must stay here and look after the crop," said Mr. Norton.

"Then I will stay, too," said Mrs. Norton.

"Oh, papa, how disappointing!" cried Mabel. "You know you have promised to show us the great cathedrals, and the village where you were born, and lots of things. Why can't we put somebody in charge?"

"Well, perhaps we can. Now no more of this. It is late. We must all be off to bed!" concluded Mr. Norton.

But there was a general outburst of thanks, many kisses, cries of enthusiastic delight from the entire family.

"I shall go to my sister, and join you in Liverpool for the return," said fräulein.

"I shall go for a walking-tour over Devon with papa," said Mabel.

"I shall live at the British Museum, and learn all about English history and homing pigeons," said Edward.

"I shall take my heavy dresses home to be remodeled, if the moths have left me any," said Mrs. Norton.

"I shall take Aunt Catharine a jug of Georgia

syrup and some sugar-cane for her children," said Frank.

"I shall take my crayons and have some lessons in London," said Mabel.

"I shall take the Queen one of my hummingbirds," said Keith ; "I know she 'll be pleased."

"I shall take — oh, mamma, *can't* I take Wag-gles and Candy Doll ?" cried Lucy. "They would both be so — so *appreciated* in England."

"Stuff and nonsense ! Stuff and nonsense ! To bed ! To bed !" cried Mr. Norton, smiling down upon them, already halfway upstairs, candle in hand.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILY GO ABROAD

NEXT day it was definitely decided that the Nortons (Mr. Norton excepted) should go to England for a visit to their sweet Aunt Catharine, at Bath, and forthwith the most energetic measures were taken looking to that end. Such an array of trunks, bags, and portmanteaus were brought down from the garret that Mr. Caruthers declared it looked as if they were about to move an army. All day long one could hear bureau drawers pulled out, closet doors closed, trunks dragged about. The personal effects of a whole family disposed in orderly fashion in wardrobes and bureaus are almost lost to sight ; but heaped on beds, floors, chairs, seem appalling.

"Why, you look as if a stray bombshell had exploded in here, Mrs. Norton. It is as great a piece of business to move four or five ladies and a family of children, as to get a regiment of men in marching order or a ship under weigh. I'd offer to help you pack, but the fact is that I am rather in disgrace in

that way. The last time my mother went to the Springs with me, I packed her best muslin dress in the bottom of a trunk, and put my boots and gun-case on top, and my clothes generally, and then got in and walked up and down till it shut; and I believe the result was not thought satisfactory for the dress," said Mr. Caruthers, as he looked in at the door of Mrs. Norton's room.

"I'll not trouble you, after that," replied Mrs. Norton. "But do keep an eye on Keith, Mr. Caruthers — everybody."

Everybody, including Mr. Caruthers, did try to do that very thing. But they were all so busy packing, and the household was in such a state of confusion, that Keith was more than a match for them all. He found and made opportunities all that week for playing truant and being naughty. On Monday, he fell into the new flower-pit, dug for the geraniums, and cut his lip badly on some broken glass at the bottom of it, besides bruising his leg severely. On Tuesday, he climbed up to the edge of the cistern, and tumbled headlong into it, with a tremendous splash and loud cries of distress and astonishment that brought fräulein to the rescue. On Wednesday, while investigating the cockleburs in Linkum's tail, he got a mild kick in his side

from a long-suffering old friend. On Thursday (the Fourth of July), he began the day gleefully at five o'clock in the morning with thirty-seven packs of fire-crackers. He let off the first pack on the kitchen stove, under Maumer Oney's very nose, and was routed by her with the dish-rag, and expelled from her premises. At one, as the family were assembled for luncheon, Mabel, looking out, beheld Keith seated on a candle-box.

"What is that child doing now? Can't somebody put him under lock and key until we are ready to start?" asked Mr. Norton; and as his eyes followed Mabel's, Keith completed the siege-train he had been carefully laying out between his legs, and touching it off, set fire to all the packs under the candle-box, and blew himself up in air, fully two feet, to his own great delight and Mrs. Norton's horror. His last pack was fastened to the back of Maumer Oney's head-handkerchief late that evening, as she sat innocently eating her supper on the kitchen porch, and being exploded frightened her out of her seven senses almost. She seized upon Keith, caught him up in her arms, and bore him off struggling to her mistress.

"Dis chile goin' to end on de gallows, ma'am. He get he neck stretched sure, 'less you stomp on



THEY WERE ALL SO BUSY PACKING



him hard; now he young, an' bre'k he spirit," she exclaimed, the ends of her head-handkerchief quivering in her wrath, her face convulsed with anger; and on hearing his offense, Mrs. Norton promptly prepared to switch him and put him to bed.

"Are you going to do it with your slipper, or with the brush, mamma?" asked Keith in a sweet, impersonal, unoffended fashion, that almost got him off. But Mr. Norton came in, and it was neither. Keith sobbed himself to sleep most piteously, only to get up next morning betimes, shave exactly one half of Youpam's head with his father's best razor in the wash-house, and bring his woeful little victim up to the house to show him to Lucy. He had taken off occasional patches of skin in so doing, and had completely changed Youpam's mind, at first most favorably impressed with the idea. Mr. Caruthers burst into a roar of laughter when he came upon the two boys in the hall. Nobody could look at Youpam and not laugh. But Candy Doll wept piteously, howled, yowled fairly, refusing all compensation and comfort for herself and her brother.

Mr. Norton gave Youpam fifty cents, which put him in a broad grin in about five minutes. Lucy pressed on him a slice of pound cake; Edward bestowed on him a knife. Mrs. Norton dressed his

head herself. But Candy Doll was inconsolable. Keith was put to bed for two days, and as he passed her he called out : —

“ I think he looks nice like that, Candy Doll, don’t you ? ”

“ De white folks is laughin’ at you ! De buckrah is mek you a sick coon ! You can’ never tek steps no more at de cake-walk wid me ! I don’ scarcely know you for my brudder any more ! Give ’em back dat money, dat knife, dat cake, an’ come along home wid me,” she cried, and tried to drag Youpam off the veranda by main force. But fifty cents was fifty cart wheels of bliss for Youpam. The knife had two blades. The cake was melting in his mouth actually.

“ Go ’long, gal, *I’se* flattersied. Dis here ain’t your nubbin o’ corn. Shet up, and go ’long wid your hollerin’ and bawlin’ ! ” replied Youpam scornfully, pulling away from her most decidedly. And in the course of the day he made overtures to Keith (shut up in the nursery and very disconsolate) through Big Maria.

“ Marse Keith kin shave off de udder side of my head, tell him, ef he ’ll give me he fire-balloon, and crack all my j’ints, and stomp on my feet, and fight me every day for a week ! I ain’t mind what he do

to me. I ain't no gal like dat Candy Doll, wid her foolishness for mek a fuss 'bout nuthin' ! " was what he generously proposed. But for the remainder of the time that the family stayed at Neosha, Keith was in disgrace and under guard, and Youpam continued to excite shouts of derisive laughter whenever and wherever he appeared. His naked, splay feet, the big patch on the seat of his blue jeans trousers, his enormous palmetto hat frayed into a fringe that half concealed his features, held Keith's interest to the last more than anything else, on the day the family took the local boat for Savannah, while Lucy had eyes only for Candy Doll, and Mabel waved her handkerchief at Mr. Caruthers.

Mrs. Norton sighed with relief, as she contemplated her flock, seated on the deck.

"All here, and all ready at last," she said plaintively. "And Keith *tied* to the mast until we get under weigh."

They did not get off for an hour after Mr. Caruthers had said good-by and gone ashore; after Mr. Norton had counted the trunks, parcels, bags, portmanteaus, made a list of them, and given it to his wife; after everything had been done, seen to, looked after. At the last moment Candy Doll slipped on board with an acorn necklace and a pair of bracelets

she had made for Lucy, followed by Youpam with a bag of popcorn for Keith.

"Mamma, don't you think the English will be very disappointed not to see Candy Doll?" asked Lucy, as she slipped on her new ornaments.

"I am afraid not, dear. Candy Doll is best here at home, on the plantation. But you may bring her back a nice present; anything you like. You shall help me choose all the presents for the household in London before we come back," replied Mrs. Norton.

Now came Mr. Norton to take leave of them all, which he did about six times. They all rushed to the side of the ship to see Mr. Norton, Mr. Caruthers, the servants, little and big, once more. The engines throbbed, the gang-plank was hauled in, the Doretta backed, turned, and they were off up the river.

"Off at last. Dear, dear! I do hope Maria will give papa good coffee. Why Edward, dear, you don't mean to say that you have brought your pigeons!" exclaimed Mrs. Norton, when Neosha was no longer in sight, and her thoughts returned to present company, her journey, her responsibilities.

Edward blushed and stammered as he always did when embarrassed: "Yes, I h-a-a-ve! I j-u-u-st could n't le-le-ave them behind, mamma."

"And fräulein 'has brought her bandbox, I see, though I told her it would be a wreck in a week."

"I haf, madame, I confess the sin," said fräulein.

"And I daresay Frank has one of his white mice tucked away somewhere."

"Only one — such a little one! Here it is now," said Frank, looking down proudly at the pretty little creature, whose tiny head peeped from the pocket of his coat as he spoke.

"Well, Mabel, what have you brought off that you ought to have left behind? What! Have you got Waggles shut up in the cabin?"

"Oh, mamma, how did you guess? Poor Waggles came whining and coaxing and almost weeping just as I came aboard, and I could n't help it; I stooped and picked him up, and you ought to have seen how delighted he was. He knew perfectly well that I had relented, and was bringing him along."

"Hurrah for Mabel and Waggles! Dear old Waggles!" cried Frank enthusiastically. "I am so glad."

"Well, here is a family! What will papa say? Did we not agree"—

"Each person agreed that the other person's pet was to be left behind, mamma. Don't be vexed—

please don't," said Mabel. "It won't really matter."

"Has anybody chanced to bring an alligator?" asked Mrs. Norton derisively. "Why did n't somebody bring an alligator, pray?"

It was now fräulein's turn to look embarrassed and blush.

"Madame, I haf. It is now in de care of de steward. Do not wex yourself, I beg. Such a little *drôle*. For my sister. How she will laugh when she sees dat little black fellow eat a fish."

Poor Mrs. Norton looked utterly astonished. Her imagination had not been equal to its own flight at all, as a reality.

"You don't mean it!" she cried. "I never knew anything so preposterous."

"Oh, mamma, I might just as well have brought my dear Candy Doll to play with! We would have had such fun," said Lucy reproachfully.

"We might as well have brought the whole plantation! I wish I had seized upon papa; I am sure I shall never get you all safely to England," her mother replied.

"Now, mamma, confess. Have not *you* brought off something contraband, too?" cried Mabel, taking her mother's hand and giving her a kiss.

"Well, dear, I must say — your papa — you see I thought I ought to put a bottle of brandy in my dressing-bag for seasickness. And papa thought it would not help me at all. But I have such a horror of it! So I did put that bottle in" —

A great shout went up from the children: "A bottle of brandy! and you a blue-ribbon temperance lady! Oh, mamma! Shocking!"

"You can't say anything to us, dearest, not a word," said Mabel, as she put a shawl around the dear mother's shoulders.

CHAPTER IX

IN DANGER

ARRIVED in Savannah safely, the Nortons were so promptly transferred to one of the ocean steamships sailing for New York that they had only time for a drive around the charming old colonial town before going on board. The younger children had never seen a big ship before, and were much excited over it. Keith was pulled off a rope ladder and very nearly fell down a windsail before they had been on board five minutes, while they were all busy establishing themselves in their respective cabins.

“ Ach ! not an eye will I close me during dis voyage ! Dat is clear ! Vid dis so mischievous boy, vot haf I but anxieties all de time ? He is not bad — no. Bort so drying — so varry, varry drying for de governess. De moder, de fader can scold, can vip, can subdue for de vorst, but de governess must always smile und smile und be patient, und say nodings, unless she be like one of vich I hear in

France, who gave to de bad child a liddle dose of somedings vot put him in a so sound sleep, und den, pouf ! she took off her slipper und gif him vot he had long time needed, und nefer got ! But I am not so wicked. I vould not wicked be vid you, Keith. But dou morst hear und obey."

Sidelong, merry glances from Keith were the only answer that came to this. Dropping down the river with the right tide and a delicious breeze, the Nortons saw from the deck the beautiful twin spires of the cathedral in Savannah dip gradually lower and lower, and all the buildings of the city disappear, together with its twinkling lights ; then came fifteen miles of steaming without stopping ; then out swept the Macon past Tybee Light into the illimitable ocean beyond, and turning, set her face northward.

"Papa is thinking of us now, children dear, you may be sure. Is n't the weather ideal? I don't feel queer in the least. Do you, Keith?" said Mrs. Norton.

"I would n't — but you see when the ship goes down, my stomach sort of stays up, mamma, and I do, rather," responded Keith, who was beginning to look positively green already. "If you don't mind, I — I won't have any supper. I'll go to bed."

"Here falls the first victim of Neptune's trident in our family," remarked Edward. "I do hope we are n't going to be ill in rows. A mile of seasick Nortons stretched on the deck would be an imposing spectacle, would n't it, mamma?"

"Oh, don't speak of it! We are none of us going to be sick! We shall have a perfectly calm voyage, and we must not dream of going down with the first ripple, dear," replied Mrs. Norton. "Put the idea out of your heads, and control yourselves when it comes to eating, and you will be all right."

In spite of this excellent advice and this cheerful prediction, in exactly one hour from that time the entire family had succumbed, Mrs. Norton excepted.

Moreover, in thirty-six hours they sailed into the midst of what proved a terrific storm. Mrs. Norton had been looking after fräulein and Keith (both utterly miserable, all the mischief gone completely out of Keith for once, and fräulein saying, "Frow me to de fishes! I cannot — no more puke — lief like dis!"), when she accidentally overheard a little conversation between the captain and his mate that made her very unhappy.

"Much wind?" asked the mate.

"Enough to blow your teeth down your throat. Come up and try it," growled the captain.

"Pretty ugly sea," remarked the mate.

"Barometer nowhere," rejoined the captain. "See here, Stunson, I don't like the look of things one bit. Look to the boats, man, and the hatches must be battened down at once. I only came down to get my mackintosh and sou'wester."

Mrs. Norton's heart gave a great bound, then sank as low as a heart can. Neither of the officers had seen her, and both went their way.

Night came on. The wind rose to such a furious pitch that every timber of the Macon shivered as if under the blows of a mighty hammer. Mrs. Norton heard the hatches fastened down. She heard the sailors tramping about overhead and their hoarse shouts and cries, the captain shouting his orders through a trumpet, the tremendous swash of the waves as they swept over the deck. Every porthole had been closed, of course, but as she lay there in her berth, she shuddered to think that there was only one plank between that raging, moaning, frightful sea outside and the dear ones near her. All night long the ship pitched and tossed gallantly on her course, careening so dreadfully sometimes that it seemed as if she must capsize, then right-

ing herself and plunging ahead, trembling in every limb. No lights were allowed in the state-rooms, but from time to time Mrs. Norton would creep out into the principal cabin, and sit down there for a moment on a sofa. She felt less frightened, somehow, among these homely, familiar surroundings ; to see the light was a comfort. So she waited dismally, first for daybreak, then for breakfast, and news from the captain. But only a few straggling waiters appeared. The stewardess was not to be found. The storm seemed to be, and was, growing worse continually. One of the waiters, looking very white and scared, and barely able to make himself heard in the general uproar, shouted to her that he would bring her some coffee and bread presently — that nothing could be cooked — the cook's galley being smashed in and flooded. He also said, in answer to the question she shrieked in his ear, that the captain had not been down, and added that the storm was awful. He brought her some coffee in a big pitcher, and half a loaf of bread in his hand. There was not another passenger in sight except Waggles, who whined continually, shivered, and pulled at the hem of her dress. Mrs. Norton was no coward, but she now fully understood that they were in danger. She behaved with her usual calm-

ness and good sense. First she gave some coffee and bread to all her poor prostrate ones that would or could take it. Then she roused Mabel and fräulein. Both women grew livid with fright when they understood what she had written on a blotting-pad and given them to read. Then fräulein fell back with a groan, too seasick to care whether she lived or died. Not so Mabel. A more plucky girl never faced disaster. Like a soldier she sprang up, rapidly dressed herself, and aided her mother to dress the children. Then the mother and daughter packed two bags, in case they should be ordered to take to the boats, as rapidly as was possible with the ship lurching so tremendously ; and picking up the children, led or carried them into the cabin, strapped life-preservers about each of them (Edward excepted,— he insisted on fastening his own), and sat down to wait developments. All that day the storm raged with increasing fury ; indeed, for three days and nights the ship labored through a terrible sea, with parting seams, and snapping masts, and straining timbers, smitten with terrific force by waves that dashed against and over it with a roar that made Mrs. Norton, listening below, quake and shiver. The lights were doused, the engines disabled, and the fires put out. The officers, lashed to

the mast, directed the brave body of seamen who by their intelligence and courage were trying to make of a mere cockleshell, comparatively, a match for one of the mightiest forces in the world. Finally the ship got into the trough of the sea. Her mainmast went by the board, with a frightful wrenching crash that almost disemboweled the poor ship, and the captain ordered the passengers on deck. There were about twelve ladies besides those of our party, and assisted by the sailors they were all taken up from the cabin, some of them half fainting, others crazed by fright, and others still quite calm, all clutching something,—children, jewels, valuables. One look Mrs. Norton gave at the sea about her, which she never forgot, then she staggered with her children into the captain's cabin. The captain cocked his pistol, stationed himself near the boats, and had them, with the greatest difficulty, launched.

“No man sets foot in these boats till the women and children are sent off,” he shouted; and looking around with a noble gesture of disdain, he added, “If there are any such cowards here, they had best not try it.”

Fräulein and Mabel were sent off in the first boat, and got clear of the ship almost immediately, for though still running high, the waves were percepti-

bly calming, the wind having shifted and partly dropped. "Are n't you coming, mamma?" cried Mabel wildly in utter dismay. With an agonizing cry to them, Mrs. Norton saw them seized and hurried over the side of the ship by the sailors, Mabel's beautiful hair blowing in every direction. A second boat was lowered, and also got off safely. A third and a fourth were capsized under her eyes. The others had been carried away in the storm. Mrs. Norton gave herself up for lost now, and was praying intently when the captain came up to her with the mate.

"Have n't you gone, captain? I thought you had left us," Mrs. Norton piteously cried.

"I shall not go until my ship goes, and then I go with her," he replied. "Come, you must go below."

He picked up Keith, and took them all, one by one, back to the gloomy, deserted cabin, talking to each of the children as kindly as possible.

"Must n't give up. The storm is over. We must try to hold together till we are picked up," said the captain cheerily, and then all at once, strong man though he was, he fell prone on the floor in a dead faint, utterly exhausted. Mrs. Norton ran to her cabin and got restoratives, slapped his hands, unloosened his collar, revived him finally, and then remembered

what she ever afterwards called “that blessed bottle of brandy.” She administered a rousing dose of it to the captain, and after lying in a state of perfect collapse for three hours, he at last opened his eyes and sat up.

“Well, I am a pretty sailor, I am,” he declared, “to go fainting like a boarding-school miss.” Don’t tell it on me, ma’am ; don’t, now ! But the fact is, that I’ve had almost nothing to eat for three days, ever since it began blowing great guns, and I have been on duty all the while. Did I dream that you have some brandy ?”

The second draught had a great effect ; in half an hour he declared himself “all right,” and added that he should “go up on deck and try to find out where they were, and what was left of them.”

“We are the only passengers left, ma’am, and most all the crew. Keep a stiff upper lip, though. Don’t take off your clothes ; but the children may as well try and get some sleep.”

Lucy’s and Keith’s eyes had already closed, and in a state of the utmost misery and suspense Mrs. Norton watched beside them.

The captain soon returned, saying, “Thought you’d be anxious, so I came back to you. We’ve been blown about three hundred miles out of our

course, as nearly as I can make out (in the general smash-up my instruments, charts, maps, etc., have almost disappeared), but never mind. Don't give way, ma'am. Don't cry ! Never could stand seeing a woman cry. The ship 's a derelict, and that 's a fact. But I reckon we 'll pull through. If we do go to pieces, I 'll lash you all to supports and hold on to the young one, I promise you."

"Oh, my husband ! my husband ! Oh, where is my Mabel ? Oh, captain, is it as bad as that ?" cried Mrs. Norton, and burst into a flood of tears, in which the children (now awake) joined so loudly that the captain got cross at once, and growled out :

"Shut up, kids ! You have n't gone to the bottom yet, and you won't either, if John Morse can help it ; and he can."

CHAPTER X

A TERRIBLE TIME

IT took the ocean three days to recover from the frightful state of agitation, rage, and fury into which it had been lashed by the storm. Its vast bosom heaved convulsively, its mysterious depths moaned piteously, its waves only very, very gradually subsided ; but at last there was not so much as a capful of wind, and the surface of no mill-pond could have looked more tranquil than the vast deep around the Macon. Mrs. Norton, not understanding the situation, grew more and more cheerful in consequence. The captain paced the deck continually, sweeping every quarter of the compass in the hope of seeing a sail. With his sailors he planked over the hole left by the mainmast after it was cut sheer off. He did a lot of calking and bailing. He tried to rig up a jury-mast, and to put the engines into something like order again, — in vain. Before Mrs. Norton he was all bluff heartiness and suspicious gayety.

" You are a plucky one, ma'am, and no mistake. To see you washing and dressing your boy, and doing your little girl's hair, and sewing on buttons, as if we were tied up hard and fast to a dock, amazes me! I thought you 'd walk the floor like a tigress, and have hysterics. I 'm not a married man myself, but I would n't mind being spliced, if I could find another woman as brave as you," he said to her. " And me fainting! Don't tell it on me ever, ma'am; don't!"

" I am not brave at all. I am the greatest coward that ever lived. But I am trying to put my trust in my good God," replied Mrs. Norton.

" Well, we 've all got to die, some time, and I do reckon it is made easy for us all, when that time comes. I 've been shipwrecked seventeen times, though, since I ran away as a lad and became first a cabin-boy and then a sailor. I don't give it up, ma'am. Certainly not! We 'll be picked up and taken off yet! You 'll see. If it was n't so serious, it would be the most comical thing on earth to be shipwrecked,—folks act so queerly. Now that wall-eyed Dutch woman that went off in the first boat. Did you see her holding on to that bandbox of hers for dear life? Who was she, any way?"

" She was my governess, Fräulein Dinkspiel," said Mrs. Norton, and actually smiled.

"And that tall young woman — a beauty — with her hair coming down to the hem of her dress ; I saw her clasping something frantically in her arms. I thought it was a baby. I saw her better, though, as she went over the side, and it was a stump-tailed puppy, if you 'll believe me, ma'am."

"That was my daughter Mabel," said Mrs. Norton rather severely.

"And Waggles ! Dear old Wag !" chorused the children.

"Now, ma'am, keep up your pecker ; don't cry ! That boat is hanging alongside some steamer this minute. There's thousands of 'em steaming along here at this season," said the captain ; and added mentally, "I hope I'll get forgiveness for telling her such a whopper."

"I hope, I pray, I trust so," replied Mrs. Norton.

"Excuse me commenting on your daughter. You see the poor things lose their heads so. Why, when I was wrecked in the Bay of Biscay, a man rushed up to me and implored me to wait one moment for him, to hold the boat, and rushed downstairs and back again like a streak of lightning. 'Have you got it ?' says I, thinking it was his money, or his dead wife's picture. 'Yes,' said he, 'I'm all right ;' and what do you think he went down for ? His new

beaver and umbrella ! That man had actually kept a whole boatful of people dashing up and down and around, and running the risk of being capsized every minute, while he went below for his beaver and umbrella ! He was an Englishman. I have had a woman implore me to "Save Bibi," at any cost, and come to find out "Bibi" was a canary. She was a Mexican. But we are a crazy, wretched lot when we are put to the touch, most of us. I am proud — that is, I shall be proud to tell the company, if I ever see land again, that there was not one of our men but did his duty nobly. One Dago and two Frenchmen tried to push past me into the boats, but I put a pistol to their heads, and they changed their minds about leaving the ship just then. Come here, Keith, and climb up on my knee. You 'll find some almonds and raisins in my pockets for good boys. I found them in the steward's locker just now."

When he got on deck, though, the captain's good spirits disappeared at once. His head hung down on his breast. His steps faltered. "Not a sail in sight !" he groaned out.

"Captain, you tell mamma that we 'll be rescued, but you don't act as if you believed it. I have been watching you. Of course no brave man scares

women and children, or is mean to them. He defends, and protects, and encourages them. I know that, if I am only a boy. I've been doing the same thing, so you have not deceived me," said Edward, coming up to him as he seated himself dejectedly on a skylight. "Please be frank with me. I am not afraid to die, neither is mamma,—but the children"— Here he broke down.

"Yes, those children. That is why I came up here. This old boat is yapping and yawning like a sleepy dog, my boy. After a bit, if rough weather comes, she'll just open her seams, and fill, and go straight to the bottom. Nothing saves her now but the water being no rougher than in a wash-basin. And knowing that, I can't stay long below. That mother of yours is a lovely woman, and when I see her sitting there so quiet and brave, with her children around her, I get a lump in my throat; and when that youngster, little Keith, puts his arms around my neck, and smiles, and says, 'You won't let me drown, will you, captain?' the tears will come, though I have n't cried for forty years. Well, you are a brave boy, and I have told you the truth. There is a chance that we may be picked up, of course,—about one in a thousand. Nobody knows where we are, and we are blown entirely out of our

course, and out of the line of traffic. When I put my ship before that wind I thought, ‘We’ll be lucky if we stop short of Africa, in this cyclone !’ ”

“ Thank you, captain,” said Edward gravely.

“ I remembered this morning that Snyder Jones, one of the captains in our line, gave me his chest to take back to New York, and I opened it, and found some charts and instruments, and I’ve got our latitude now, and longitude. Would you like to see it? Come into my cabin. Small comfort now,—but yet it is a kind of satisfaction,” replied the captain.

When he had inspected the captain’s mysterious calculations, and had them explained to him, and stared at the sun, and been given a lesson generally in seamanship, Edward slowly walked off to feed his pigeons, which he had found cooing and prinking and sunning themselves as they walked daintily around their cage in a circle in the steward’s pantry on the lower deck, the day after the storm, absolutely unhurt. He took them out now and stroked their feathers, thinking all the while of his talk with the captain. Then a thought struck him, and he turned red and pale, and then red again under the warm flush of the hope it inspired.

“ Idiot, never to have thought of it before !”

he exclaimed. Then he generously fed his birds, carefully fastened a note that he wrote around the body of each, and taking Phœbe in his hand, walked to the bow of the vessel.

“Go, Phœbe, and bring us succor,” he said to his pet, as he pressed her against his cheek. Then flinging her off, he cried out: “Go home, Phœbe; go home!”

Up rose Phœbe as blithe as possible, circled three times above his head, and then straight as a dart took her course.

In half an hour Edward got out Lex, stroked him, kissed him, and said, “Dear old Lex, don’t fail us. You are our only hope. Go home, Lex! Go home!”

Up rose Lex on even bolder wing, and, with even greater delight, circled as Phœbe had done, and took exactly the same course.

“I’ll not tell mamma. It would excite, disappoint her, perhaps, too much,” thought Edward, as he stood there, watching Lex with as much eagerness as sadness, until he was out of sight. “But I will tell the captain.” He did so, and the captain thought it an excellent idea.

“If your birds are what you claim, and if they go home, and if this weather holds” — he said, but Edward could not but feel encouraged.

Meanwhile Mr. Norton was missing his family very much ; roving restlessly about the house and over the garden ; working hard over his roses in his efforts to dispel the sense of loss and loneliness that beset him.

“ What is the matter with me, I wonder, Caruthers ? I have n’t slept for two nights. I can’t eat, I can’t keep still. I feel as gloomy as if I had lost my wife, really,— or my fortune. I think I must have a touch of fever. No, I have n’t either. Perhaps my liver is out of order. I vow it makes me superstitious. I wish I could hear that they are all safe in New York. I wish I had taken them down to Savannah, to England, myself, and left the crop to take care of itself,” said Mr. Norton to the tutor one morning, after breakfast.

“ The house is very different — very — when they are away. Miss Mabel makes things so cheerful, and the boys are so full of life. You are naturally upset and lonely, sir,” replied Mr. Caruthers.

Upset Mr. Norton was that morning, beyond a doubt. He tried to read, he tried to write, he tried to graft a few roses ; finally he seized a spade and dug up a garden-bed, for the sake of hard work. But when it got too hot to go on, he picked up his tools, and was in the act of depositing them in the

tool-house, when a pigeon flew over his head up into Edward's pretty pigeon-cote, and dropped on the tiny veranda. It was Phœbe, and she sat there with eyes closed and wings furled, completely exhausted. Mr. Norton was used to seeing the pigeons. He did not know that Edward had taken his famous "homers" with him, hoping to win an English prize. So he only glanced at the bird, and continued to clean the dirt off his spade. But Candy Doll came up at that moment, and no sooner did she set eyes on Phœbe than she gave a loud shriek, then threw herself down on the ground face foremost, just as she had done when the whale had so frightened her, and beat her head against the earth, and drummed with her feet, crying out:—

"Oh, my Lord ! Oh, my Lord ! Oh, my Lord !"

Mr. Caruthers now appeared, took her up, shook her mildly, and got out of her:—

"Oh, dat's Phœbe ! Dat's Phœbe, wha' Marse Edward tek wid 'em. Look at her, sittin' dar ! Oh, my Lord ! Oh, my Lord !"

"What !" fairly shouted Mr. Norton, turning as white as the rose he wore in his buttonhole. "What does she say, Dick ? Edward did not take his birds. I forbade the children to take their pets."

"But he *did* tek 'em. He did tek 'em all de

same. And I dream of a big black crow las' night. Dey done drownded! Dey done all bin drownded. Oh, my Lord!" exclaimed Candy Doll. "Oh, Miss Lucy!" and throwing herself down again on the earth, she literally tore her hair out by handfuls and poured sand over her head, as she shrieked and sobbed aloud, lost to all fear of the "buckrah" for once in her loving grief over Lucy drowned.

"She tell de truff — 'scusin' me sayin' so. I tek de birds on de boat for Marse Edward, and gin 'em to de steward," put in Daddy Dick, who was cleaning the stable near them.

As he spoke there was a second "whirr! whirr!" overhead; a second rush, and brave Lex dropped at the very feet of Daddy Dick. Mr. Norton pounced on him, Mr. Caruthers seized Phœbe, and in a moment the two gentlemen were reading Edward's messages. The next they were saddling their horses with trembling hands, and were off for the landing, for Savannah, inwardly in a whirlwind, a tempest of emotion, outwardly quite calm.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESCUE

BUT for Daddy Dick, important as were the services that Phœbe and Lex had rendered, both birds would have died, their duty nobly done. While Mr. Norton and Mr. Caruthers were speeding away to Savannah, though at what seemed to their impatient hearts a snail's pace, Daddy Dick got out his own private bottle of "confusion maker" and dosed his little feathered friends judiciously, stroking them affectionately and calling them "dear, God-blessed tings," the while. He also made for them a nice, warm mash of his finest bruised sugar-corn, and in every way cared for them so well that in a week they were quite strong and well again, and would perch on his shoulders, eat from his hand, and come at his call, just as if he were Edward.

Once in Savannah, the two gentlemen received the kindest sympathy and most prompt aid from everybody whom they met. Telegrams were sent flying, a steamer provided, provisioned, and dis-

patched, in an incredibly short time. Thanks to the messages, they lost no time in searching for the Macon, but steamed for the place indicated by the captain as fast as the engines of the Atlanta could drive them without running the risk of explosion. Still, once afloat on the vast ocean before them, it was not easy to be sure of finding anything, and even when they had arrived in the neighborhood indicated, they had a task before them that tried them terribly. Up, and down, and around they steamed for two days, seeing nothing — no sails — no wreck — not even a floating spar. Poor Mr. Norton groaned audibly as he turned his glass upon every quarter of the ocean. Young Caruthers, too, never left the deck for one moment. The yards were full of volunteers. The captain showed his anxiety by his stern, curt orders and continual consultation of his charts, by taking the wheel himself, and going aloft to satisfy himself that there was nothing in sight. It was in the dark of the moon, but flashlights threw their long, searching rays here, there, everywhere, all through the second night, in vain, and Mr. Norton had fallen asleep in his chair toward four o'clock, when he was aroused by a loud shout from the quartermaster aloft :—



"Something to the nor'west, sir. Can't make out what. Looks like a hencoop."

The captain sprang to the wheel instantly, and turned the Atlanta's prow in that direction. In dead silence the steamer glided through the water for about twenty minutes, while Mr. Norton's heart almost stopped beating, and Mr. Caruthers raced up and down the deck, unable to keep still, and every sailor and passenger aboard hung over the rails, all eyes and ears. A flashlight was now turned on, and revealed the company's flag, its folds rippling in the night wind gently, a raft, and some figures huddled together on it. A great cheer went up from the Atlanta. A figure was seen to rise on the raft. An answering "Hallo!" came from a trumpet. Other figures moved; voices could now be heard; a devout "Thank God! Thank God, you've come!" and in a little while Mrs. Norton was again in her husband's arms. The crowd of rough sailors, with instinctive delicacy, pressed back as eagerly as they had pressed forward, leaving the husband and wife alone; they seized the children, wrung the captain's hand off almost, the mates', the rescued sailors'. Never was there greater joy in human hearts.

"And Mabel! — fräulein! Where are they?" cried Mr. Norton at last, when he had again and

again passionately embraced Keith, and Lucy, and Edward. His delight was at once turned into mourning by Mrs. Norton's reply, and he went below with his family, closing his cabin door upon all the world. Nobody remembered, nobody noticed Mr. Caruthers, who sank down on the deck and sobbed like a child.

"We were all asleep when your cheer roused us," said the captain. "I was dreaming of my mother, and the farm where I was born. Mrs. Norton had been ill for twenty-four hours. All our food was gone; we had eaten nothing for two days, and we had only one jug of water left. We had lost all hope of being picked up. I tell you, if you had come twelve hours later, it would have been too late. We lashed this raft together a week ago, got on it, and rowed out of reach of being sucked in by the whirlpool caused by a sinking ship. Poor old Macon! She held together wonderfully to the last; and I hated to see her go down like poison. I've brought her through many a storm, one or two as bad as this. But she got in the trough of the sea, and her engines were disabled, so I could do nothing, not a thing. As for Mrs. Norton, she behaved splendidly through the whole thing. She actually sang to those children of hers and told them stories to keep up their spirits, until she fell ill from the heat and starvation;

and then whenever she opened her eyes, she would smile at them, and tell them it was all right — God and the captain would take care of them. Has anything been heard from the boats that got off safely ? Here, somebody, give me something to eat and drink, and some tobacco ; I 'm played out ! No ; no clothes, I 'm not wet at all. Luckily we have not had a capful of wind, not a ripple, since the storm.”

The Atlanta's instructions were to proceed to New York after the rescue was accomplished, and to New York she went accordingly ; everybody on board spoiling little Keith, and lavishing every kindness possible on the Nortons and other survivors of the Macon. Arrived there, Mr. Caruthers went ashore on the first tug he could get, and when the Atlanta's gang-plank was shoved out, he bounded aboard and rushed up to Mrs. Norton, radiant and breathless. That is, he thought he was seizing and embracing Mrs. Norton as he shouted,—

“ It is all right ! Miss Mabel is safe ! She was picked up by a French brig and carried to Dieppe. From there she was sent to England, and she is now at Bath with her aunt. There is a whole batch of telegrams for Mr. Norton in my pocket.”

It was really the stewardess whom he had seized in his intense excitement, but Mrs. Norton appeared

immediately, and fainted on hearing the glorious news, to Mr. Caruthers's great concern.

"Blundering idiot that I am, I ought not to have told you so suddenly. Look up, dear Mrs. Norton. Take this. You must not give way now when all is well over,—thank God!—after keeping up so long and bravely. I am so happy that I feel like embracing the whole world."

"You did embrace the stewardess, certainly," replied Mrs. Norton, from the sofa where she had been laid, with a faint smile. "Tell me again about Mabel. I will forgive you, if the stewardess will."

"I hardly dare say that I took her for you. Your figures are a good deal alike," said Mr. Caruthers eagerly. "You will go to England by the first steamer, of course."

This was precisely what Mr. Norton did as soon as they could get ready. And as New York is a wonderful place for shipwrecked people to provide themselves with anything and everything they may need, if they only have full purses, it took Mrs. Norton only three days to get outfits for herself and the children, when she felt strong enough to undertake it. Not without a great deal of apprehension could she again trust herself to such an uncertain, treacherous element as the sea, still less those she loved;

but it had to be done, and eight days later the whole family party walked into the lovely grounds of Aunt Catharine's charming villa at Bath. They were expected, of course, — eagerly so. Mabel, and her aunt, and fräulein, and the butler, two footmen, three maids, the cook, and the knife-boy, had all been on the *qui vive* over their arrival for twenty-four hours, yet after all they reached there unexpectedly. In spite of English decorum, the villa people all swarmed out of the house with the first peal of the gate-bell, and fell upon, embraced, and seized the Nortons and all their effects, and bore them into the house, with the most intense tenderness and goodwill. Never was there such a hubbub.

Mabel, looking as well and pretty as possible, fairly ran into her mother's outstretched arms. Aunt Catharine wept copiously over her brother. The butler, who, as a rule, would no more demean himself by carrying a parcel than if he were the Lord Chief Justice of England, actually forgot everything except that he was human and the family just saved from shipwreck, and filled his arms with bags and wraps. Cook bore off Keith, struggling, into the drawing-room, much against his will, kissing him (a thing he hated), and calling him a "precious love," and a "dear." The footmen tackled the lug-

gage with smiling alacrity. Boots possessed himself of all the umbrellas, and gazed respectfully at "Mr. Frank" as one of the victims of a disaster as terrible as any set forth in the "shilling shockers" of which he was so fond. The three maids curtsied continually, at the shortest possible intervals, and offered their assistance to Mrs. Norton and Lucy.

Last of all came fräulein, her broad German face wreathed in smiles, her honest blue eyes full of tears :

"Madame ! thee do I again behold,—thanks to the Allgütigste ; und all the dear children ; und we here, all safe, too ; not one lost," she said, as she affectionately embraced and kissed Mrs. Norton. Then, her mood changing, "Und behold ! Here is even my hat, here on my head ! It is the same, only the flowers changed ; the ribbon was not hurt at all, though the bandbox, in course, had to go, the sailor-mens swore over it so as never was."

"And if here is n't Waggles," cried Lucy and Frank in a breath, and then tumbled over each other in the path in the effort to possess themselves entirely of their beloved Wag. There he was, to be sure, as large as life and as brisk as possible, all joyous bark and loving leaps, his stump of a tail revolving like a mill-wheel in his delight at seeing the children again, a laugh on his face, if ever a dog laughed in all this world.

The sight of him relieved the tension they were all feeling over this most happy but agitating reunion, and together they all streamed into the house, the Nortons to talk and talk and talk, till past midnight; to be petted, and coddled, and feasted by all the household, called upon by the rector and the neighbors, lionized and rejoiced over by the entire community.

"Oh, mamma, I can't tell you what I felt when I found myself in that cockle-shell of an open boat on that stormy sea, without you! I can't stand thinking of it, even; I never shall be able to do so without a shudder. The men were very rough, and were beginning to quarrel dreadfully before we were rescued. It was a great comfort to have fräulein with us; and she was so kind, so sweet, so unselfish. I shall always love her dearly for it. And the French people were so good to us, too, sending us on at once here to auntie, when we had no money at all, and bringing us clothing, flowers, books, and bonbons. You must write to the Le Maîtres at once, dear; I never can forget how kind they were. And oh, how delicious it is to have you, and papa, and the dear children back again, and all safe and well, is n't it?" said Mabel, as she moved about her bedroom that night.

"It is, indeed, my darling child. I think there will be some thankful hearts singing the Te Deum next Sunday at church,—mine for one."

"And mine. And what of Mr. Caruthers, mamma? Did n't papa say that he had gone to Virginia?" said Mabel, a bright blush rising to the very roots of her hair as she spoke.

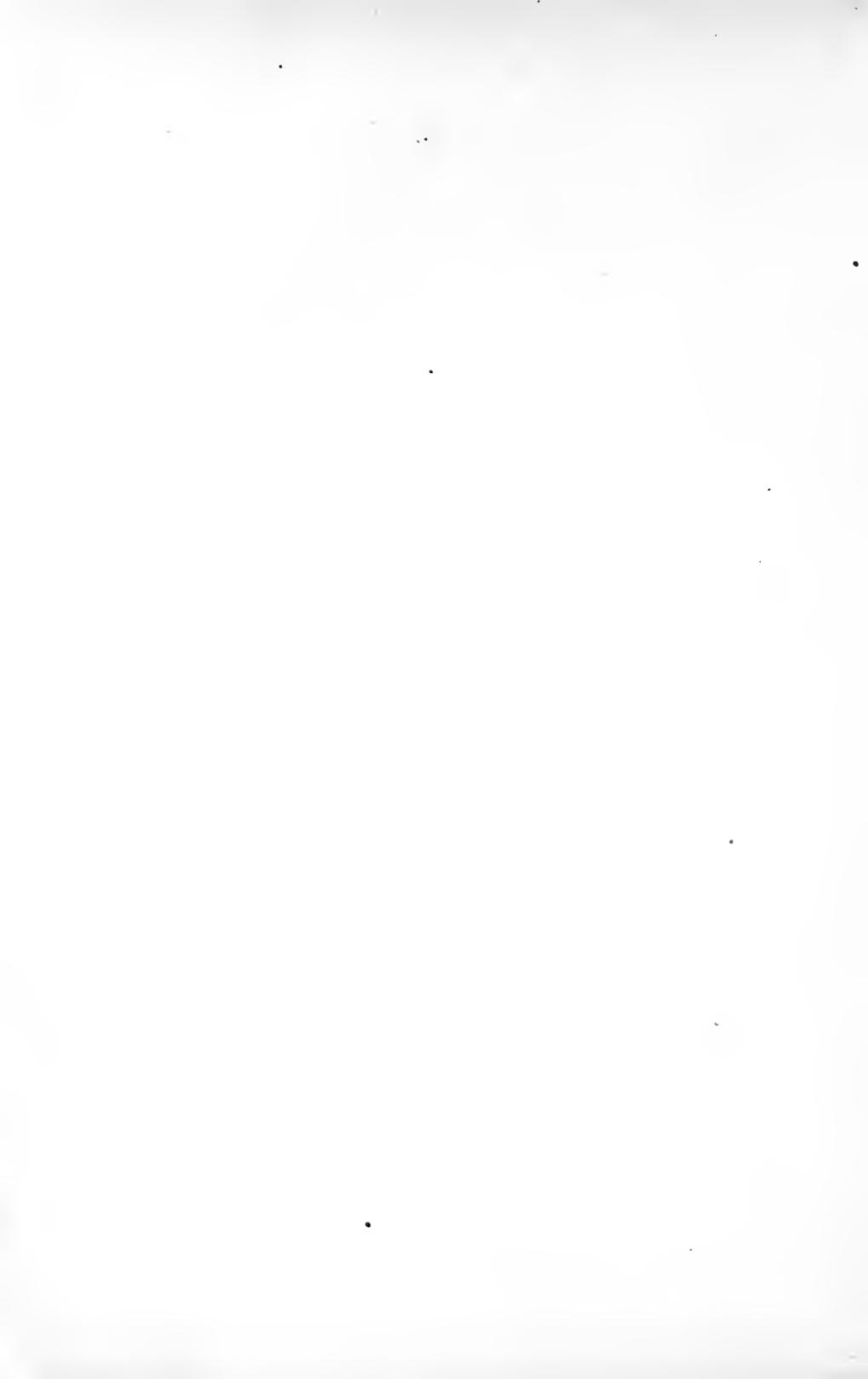
"Yes. He said I was to tell you, dear, how infinitely thankful he was when he got the telegram, and that he hoped to be back with us all at 'Neosha' for Christmas. Come kiss me good-night, daughter mine," replied Mrs. Norton, then added a low but most loving and fervent "God bless you!"

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